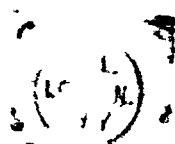


The Labour Party and the Idea of Citizenship, c.1931-1951

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development and articulation of ideas of citizenship by the Labour Party and its sympathizers in academia and the professions. Setting this analysis within the context of key policy debates the study explores how ideas of citizenship shaped critiques of the relationships between central government and local government, voluntary groups and the individual.

Present historiographical orthodoxy has skewed our understanding of Labour's attitude to society and the state, overemphasising the collectivist nature and centralising intentions of the Labour party, while underplaying other important ideological trends within the party. In particular, historical analyses which stress the party's commitment from the 1930s to achieving the transition to socialism through a strategy of planning, (of industrial development, production, investment, and so on), have generally concluded that the party based its programme on a centralised, expert-driven state, with control removed from the grasp of the ordinary people. The re-evaluation developed here questions this analysis and, fundamentally, seeks to loosen the almost overwhelming concentration on the mechanisms chosen by the Labour for the implementation of policy. It focuses instead on the discussion of ideas that lay behind these policies and points to the variety of opinions on the meaning and implications of social and economic planning that surfaced in the mid-twentieth century Labour party. In particular, it reveals considerable interest in the development of an active and participatory citizenship among socialist thinkers and politicians, themes which have hitherto largely been seen as missing elements in the ideas of the interwar and immediate postwar Labour party.

The chief problem for the interwar and postwar Labour party, the thesis argues, was not blindness to the issue of participation in an age characterised by increasingly complex and large-scale social organisation: on the contrary, this feature of modern living was recognised and policies were framed to address its consequences. The difficulty in achieving the participatory ideal lay more in the complicated interplay of interests in society, in the established structures of government, and in the fact that citizens showed themselves to be more interested in affluence and consumption than in active participation in the civic process, than in a straightforward ideological indifference or antipathy towards wide and decentralised social participation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| ABCA | Army Bureau of Current Affairs |
| AEC | Association for Education in Citizenship |
| BMA | British Medical Association |
| COI | Central Office of Information |
| EMB | Empire Marketing Board |
| FOA | Frederic Osborn Archive, Welwyn Garden City Library |
| GCTPA | Garden Cities and Town Planning Association |
| GLRO | Greater London Record Office |
| GPO | General Post Office |
| ILP | Independent Labour Party |
| LCC | London County Council |
| LLP | London Labour Party |
| LPA | Labour Party Archives, Museum of Labour History, Manchester |
| MOI | Ministry of Information |
| NALGO | National Association of Local Government Officers |
| NCSS | National Council of Social Service |
| NEC | National Executive Committee of the Labour Party |
| NFRB | New Fabian Research Bureau |
| PEP | Political and Economic Planning |
| PPS | Parliamentary Private Secretary |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| SMA | Socialist Medical Association |
| TCPA | Town and Country Planning Association |
| WEA | Workers' Educational Association |

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I

INTRODUCTION

In the transition to political democracy, this country...underwent...no inner conversion. She accepted it as a convenience, like an improved system of telephones; she did not dedicate herself to it as the expression of a moral idea of comradeship and equality, the avowal of which could leave nothing the same. She changed her political garments, but not her heart. She carried into the democratic era, not only the institutions, but the social habits and mentality of the oldest and toughest plutocracy in the world....She went into the ballot-box touching her hat.

R.H.Tawney, 'The Realities of Democracy'¹

Mass democracy after 1931 offered the potential for participation and citizen involvement to an unprecedented extent, but also carried the prospect of social conflict, widespread disillusionment, and the threat of totalitarianism. It advanced the prospect of greater individual opportunities but also the danger of citizen subordination, with long-protected freedoms curbed by an interventionist state. Social thought and social policy debates reflected these elements of hopefulness and concern. Awareness of both the opportunities and the liabilities of living in a characteristically 'modern' social and political environment aroused a complicated mixture of emotions and practical strategies among Britain's politicians and intellectuals.² While some commentators spoke of holding back the tide, others, though perhaps with one eye on a past golden age, looked for means of utilizing the multifarious advantages of modernity to build a stronger, less divided society. In an atmosphere characterised by an earnest endeavour to understand the forces of social organisation and cohesion, indeed, increasing numbers of people asserted the need for British society to adapt and emerge anew, to seize the opportunities of the modern world to foster a more integrated and vigorous society. For many politicians, academics, writers and professionals associated with the Labour party during

¹ R.H.Tawney, 'The Realities of Democracy', quoted in R.Terrill, *R.H.Tawney and His Times. Socialism as Fellowship*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), 173.

² Jose Harris explores the notion of modernity and the 'widely diffused sense of living in a peculiarly modern age' that existed in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain in her *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914*, (Harmondsworth, 1994 ed.), 32-6. Recognition of the potentials and the problems of modern society continued beyond the Great War, a period when society itself appeared to be in what Lloyd George called a 'molten' state, pliable and open to change, quoted in Terrill, *R.H.Tawney*, 181.

this period, this search included the rectification of the remaining deficiencies of Britain's democracy, and the removal of social and economic barriers to full civic participation as well as those of a political or institutional nature.

At the centre of these debates and, similarly, at the centre of our historical appreciation of them, lies the question of the boundaries between the state and civil society. Questions were posed: what was the role of ordinary men and women in twentieth-century society, how did they combine in terms of the nation and within their local communities? What were their needs, their rights, their responsibilities? How did they stand in relation to the state and to each other? These fundamental issues received serious consideration in the interwar, wartime and reconstruction years: the ensuing debates and discussions communicate much about contemporary views on the meanings of citizenship, the state and community. The nature of the state's claim over society, and the negotiation of the bonds and the borders between the state and the citizen during the period 1931-51 is the focus of this study.

Citizenship is an amorphous and malleable concept. The utility of the concept, and its meaning, are liable to vary between different groups of people and across different periods of time. Emphases and rhetorical conventions are pliant and reflective of contemporary attitudes. Consequently, sensitivity to the context of usage, in particular to the language used in association with the idea of citizenship, is fundamental to any analysis which seeks to explore its application in a given period. The recent political interest in the idea of citizenship has encouraged consideration of the historical use of the concept.³ In particular, the postwar liberal democratic idea of citizenship has come under scrutiny as the boundaries of state action, no longer regarded as a constant, are reassessed.⁴ Described by Michael Ignatieff as essentially the 'passive' expression of 'the

³ See, for example, M. Ignatieff, 'Citizenship and Moral Narcissism', *Political Quarterly*, 60, (1989), 63-74; A. Oldfield, *Citizenship and Community: Civic Republicanism and the Modern World*, (1990); A. Oldfield, 'Citizenship: An Unnatural Practice?', *Political Quarterly*, 61, (1990), 177-87.

⁴ See C.Maier, 'Introduction', in C.Maier (ed.), *Changing Boundaries of the Political: Essays on the Evolving Balance Between State and Society, Public and Private in Europe*, (Cambridge, 1992). See also D.S.King, *The New Right: Politics, Markets and Citizenship*, (Basingstoke, 1987); D.S.King and J.Waldron, 'Citizenship, Social

citizenship of equal entitlement', the concept was given tangible meaning in the postwar period through family allowances, free health care, the dole and the old age pension. In the eyes of the political right, he asserts, it became a 'bargain between strangers which abridged the liberties of both rich and poor while infantilizing the poor', rendering them dependent on a maternal, but debilitating welfare state. For the left, in the wake of a diminishing socialist reality, it became a way to supplement the irremovable contradictions of the market. From either perspective, the issue of empowerment, so fundamental to the current rhetorical resurgence of citizenship, is said to be missing. Indeed, Ignatieff argues, it was wilfully excluded:

It is no accident that the citizenship ideal of postwar liberals and social democrats stressed the passive quality of entitlements at the expense of the active equality of participation. The entitled were never empowered, because empowerment would have infringed the prerogatives of the managers of the welfare state.⁵

Private initiative and individual responsibility were traded for universal welfare benefits, entitlement sought in preference to empowerment.

This interpretation of the postwar idea of citizenship, however, is unbalanced. Fundamentally, it fails to explore the variability of the concept of citizenship: it was, as it remains, a contested notion. Indeed, the indeterminate and mutable nature of the concept of citizenship, and of the adjacent notion of community, is an integral part of their development and articulation in the mid-twentieth century. This variability was manifested in several ways.

Firstly, a broad ownership of both concepts was claimed during this period: politicians and intellectuals across the political spectrum engaged with the notions in their attempts to find solutions for social and economic dysfunction. The notion of citizenship, for instance, appealed to individuals and groups of the centre and centre-left whilst also raising the interest of more traditional paternalistic Tories. The meanings of citizenship were clearly diffuse, incorporating a mixture of rights, responsibilities and duties, the

Citizenship and the Defence of Welfare Vision', *British Journal of Political Science*, 18, (1988), 415-48; M.Roche, 'Citizenship, Social Theory and Social Change', *Theory and Society*, 16, (1987), 363-99; B.Turner, *Citizenship and Capitalism: the Debate over Reformism*, (1986).

⁵ Ignatieff, 'Citizenship and Moral Narcissism', 63-74.

proportions of which greatly varied. Consequently, contextualisation of usage, particularly in terms of their relationship with other concepts of social and political thought, and the wider social and political aims associated with their advocacy, is needed.

Secondly, the flexibility of the criteria of citizenship must be recognised: the period 1931-51 saw the articulation of various interpretations of the boundaries and form of citizenship. The legacies of the Great War and the interwar economic depression imparted conflicting messages about the British state and society; messages both of resilience and instability.⁶ Post-war optimism in the sturdiness of the British state was complicated by the awareness of pressing social and economic problems: the extreme dislocation of the distressed areas contrasted with prosperous regions in the South-East and parts of the Midlands, and with periodic booms in consumption; overcrowding and urban ill-health drew an alarmed reaction while speculative building pushed ever deeper into the countryside. A curious blend of attitudes and aspirations emerged, encouraging the development of an intellectual framework which retained a belief in the benign nature of the British state while leaving the issue of the proper relationship between state, society and citizen decidedly open to question.⁷ While the 1918 Representation of the

⁶ R. McKibbin, 'Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?', *English Historical Review*, 99, (1984), 297-331, reveals some aspects of the contemporary acceptance of the established framework of the British state. See also R.H. Tawney's discussion of 'Henry Dubb', a representation of the ordinary, honest citizen in whom, Tawney argued, the nation could place hope and trust, *Commonplace Book*, (ed.) J.M. Winter, (Cambridge, 1972), and R.H. Tawney, *The Attack and Other Papers*, (1953); M. Freedman, *Liberalism Divided. A Study in British Political Thought 1914-1939*, (Oxford, 1986). See S. Pedersen and P. Mandler, 'The British Intelligentsia after the Victorians', in S. Pedersen and P. Mandler (eds.), *After the Victorians. Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain*, (1994), 1-28. for a discussion of the tensions of the age as felt by the political and cultural elite.

⁷ J. Harris, 'Society and the State in Twentieth Century Britain' in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.) *Cambridge Social History of Britain, Vol. 3: Social Agencies and Institutions*, (Cambridge, 1990), 74-80; P. Johnson, 'The Role of the State in Twentieth-Century Britain', in P. Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, (1994), 476-91; D. Sutton, 'Liberalism, State Collectivism and the Social Relations of Citizenship' in M. Langan and B. Schwarz (eds.), *Crises in the British State 1880-1930*, (1985), 63. A pluralist position, which to a greater or lesser degree, discounted the role of the state, also flourished during this uncertain period, see Harris, 'Society and the State', 67; A. Vincent, *Theories of the State*, (Oxford, 1987), chapter 6; P. Hirst, *The Pluralist Theory of the State: Selected Writings of G.D.H. Cole, J.N. Figgis*,

People Act affirmed the place of British parliamentary sovereignty and widened political citizenship to all men over twenty-one and to women over thirty, other expressions of citizenship remained vague, even contradictory. Franchise reform removed the penalty of exclusion for those receiving poor relief yet the stigma of assistance remained, leaving many individuals practically excluded from the wider community of citizens.⁸ Moreover, as unemployment rose to new heights in the early 1930s, the late-Victorian nexus of citizenship and independence from the state was forcibly challenged.⁹ The difficulty of maintaining such a tenet in post-war Britain had already been demonstrated in the early 1920s when rising unemployment highlighted the issue of 'pauper votes' and the dangers of 'corruption' in elections to Poor Law Boards of Guardians: since many of the newly unemployed were ex-servicemen, denial of full rights of citizenship through exclusion from the local franchise, was politically untenable.¹⁰ Certainly, by the early 1930s the numerous unemployed then in receipt of the dole could not easily be categorised as society's "residuum". Apart from their large number, many of the men in this position were highly skilled and came from trades and communities which had long taken pride in their sense of independence. Indeed, the striving of such men to retain the symbols of their independence such as trade union membership, rendered meaningless charges of

and H. J. Laski, (1989). For an analysis how gender relations affected and were affected by these shifting relationships see J. Lewis, 'Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of "Welfare States": the British Case', *Social History*, 19, (1994), 37-53, S. Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France 1914-1945*, (Cambridge, 1993).

⁸ For the removal of pauper franchise exclusion see A. Deacon and E. Briggs, 'Local Democracy and Central Policy: the Issue of Pauper Votes in the 1920s', *Policy and Politics*, 2, (1973-4), 347-64.

⁹ For a clear statement of this tenet of Victorian politics see J.S. Mill, *Representative Government*, (1910 ed.), 282.

¹⁰ Deacon and Briggs, 'Local Democracy and Central Policy', 355-6. During the debates on the 1928 Representation of the People Bill, the Conservative Home Secretary Joynson-Hicks sought the inclusion of a clause to disqualify paupers from Parliamentary and local elections. Yet, this was deemed politically inadmissible due to the high numbers of ex-servicemen swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

shirking or malingering.¹¹ What impact did this situation of dependence have on notions of citizenship?

The changing structure of communities also aroused interest and concern. As large-scale house building, both by local authorities and by private contractors, brought working people into out-of-town housing estates and dormitory suburbs, concern grew that insanitary slums were merely being replaced by new zones of exclusion. While the face-to-face, mixed community of the traditional English village was being decimated by rural depopulation and tarmac roads, the crowded city and its soulless satellites grew ever more polarised. Civic and community spirit, many believed, were in danger of being replaced by suburban anomie. There was also apprehension for the social, cultural and political consequences of the disappearance or breakdown of the traditional power elites of cities. This social stratum had been instrumental in the development of a strong civic culture in the mid-Victorian period, a movement which had solidified and stabilized the urban environment. But now, with the residential withdrawal of the business elite from the central city to more salubrious suburban or rural areas, and their replacement by large, multi-plant businesses, this social cement was in danger of breaking down. The local nature of the industrial middle-class elite was dissipating and, according to many, needed to be re-invigorated or replaced with an alternative.¹²

Moreover, discussions on citizenship explored the boundaries of gender, and also nationality and race. Campaigners for an improvement in the position of women urged the widening of the borders of citizenship and, particularly, the extension of the newly-won political rights to the social and economic sphere.¹³ Similarly, issues of inclusion or

¹¹ G. Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990*, (Oxford, 1994), 243; D. Vincent, *Poor Citizens. The State and the Poor in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (New York, 1991); J.B. Priestley, *English Journey*, (1934), 407; *Men Without Work. A Report Made to the Pilgrim Trust*, (Cambridge, 1938), 195. See also F.M. Miller, 'The Unemployment Policy of the National Government, 1931-1936', *Historical Journal*, 29, (1976), 455.

¹² Neville Chamberlain, for example, was particularly vocal on this issue.

¹³ See for example, S. Pedersen, 'Eleanor Rathbone 1872-1946. The Victorian Family under the Daughter's Eye', in Pedersen and Mandler (eds.), *After the Victorians*, 105-25; H. Jones (ed.), *Duty and Citizenship. The Correspondence and Political Papers of Violet Markham, 1896-1953*, (1994); J. Lewis, 'Women, Social Work and Social Welfare in Twentieth-Century Britain: From (Unpaid) Influence to (Paid) Oblivion?', in M.J. Daunt

exclusion, of the rights of migrants and their limitations, were debated in the context of immigration and the Empire.¹⁴ These are important aspects of the contemporary exploration of the concept of citizenship which are benefitting from a heightened academic attention, but a detailed examination of these dimensions of the contemporary articulation of citizenship lies beyond the scope of this present thesis.

Citizenship may also vary in spatial terms, being rooted, for instance, in the locality, the nation, or even the region. Political commentators in the interwar and immediate postwar period debated the implications for citizenship of situating state power variously with the locality, the region and the nation, yet this aspect of their debate has not received detailed examination. At the base of their discussions lay an awareness of the changing dimensions of 'modern' social activity. As communications and the provision of public services widened from the later nineteenth century, the scale of social relationships changed. In particular, increasing social expectations and technological achievements, evidenced, for example, by expanded electricity, gas and transport services, pushed the mechanisms of administration into new and unanticipated directions. Piecemeal revisions of the nineteenth-century local government framework were instituted, usually through a combination of new, non-elected, particularist bodies such as the Metropolitan Water Board and the Port of London Authority, and by the transference of control to central government bodies. Yet, how were these actions regarded by social democratic politicians and policy-makers? What was their opinion of the impact of these changes on the location and practice of citizenship? These questions

(ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in Britain*, (forthcoming, 1996), 203-223.

¹⁴ With the growing concern of the national, indeed, international implications of immigration from the 1880s, the locus of rights of entitlement shifted from the local state's rules of 'settlement' to the national state's conception of citizenship. See D. Feldman, 'The Importance of Being English: Jewish Immigration and the Decay of Liberal England', in D. Feldman and G. Stedman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis - London: Histories and Representations since 1800*, (1989), 56-84; D. Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, (New Haven, 1994); See also K. Paul, 'The Politics of Citizenship in Postwar Britain', *Contemporary Record*, 6, (1992), 452-73, for the debates surrounding the Nationality Act of 1948.

are under-exposed in the majority of historical studies.¹⁵

Similarly, the modes of expression of citizenship were variously interpreted by interested commentators. Within the mid-twentieth century Labour Party several interpretations, often held in combination, characterised understanding of the relationships of citizenship. Many in the Labour movement, for example, strongly held the belief that citizenship and democracy were expressed through the elective principle and its concomitant, public accountability. Herbert Morrison, for instance, firmly asserted the importance of a direct link of accountability between representative and citizen in the delivery of democratic government.¹⁶ Yet while this understanding of democracy remained a strong force within the party throughout the period, there were additional expressions of citizenship and democracy present within the movement which have received less historical recognition.¹⁷ These negotiated and evolving conceptions need to be illuminated through detailed textual analyses if a more complete understanding of the interaction between Labour's ideology, welfare policy and the shape of the postwar state is to be gained. A particular weakness of Ignatieff's portrayal of citizenship within the welfare state can be related to this point, that is, the failure to recognise the continuation of a language of 'duties' in the notions of citizenship articulated by politicians and thinkers of the left; a rhetoric which incorporated concern for the development of an active and participant social community. Empowerment, it was argued, would follow the combination of rights and duties and the establishment of clear lines of responsibility and accountability. In essence, the language of individual needs and entitlements was not divorced from a communal understanding of the concept in which individuals were

¹⁵ The implications of these issues are discussed below in Part II. A theoretical discussion of the relationships between the centre and the periphery can be found in J. Bulpitt, *Territory and Power in the United Kingdom*, (Manchester, 1983).

¹⁶ Cole Papers, D2/2/10, Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, H. Morrison, 'Draft Memorandum on Reorganisation of Local Government', 11 May 1920. See also his *Citizen's Charter*, London Labour Party pamphlet, (1921). Very few Labour figures, even in the early to mid-1930s, accepted the logic of the Bolshevik argument that free political expression was an irrelevance once workers became united with the State through the network of Soviets.

¹⁷ See for example the writings of R.H. Tawney and G.D.H. Cole. These are examined in more detail below, especially in Parts II and III.

defined as 'citizens among other citizens'.¹⁸

The neglect of the continuation of a dual vision of citizenship stems, in large part, from the development of a misleading historiography of socialist and social democratic thought and policy. The orthodox interpretation of the British left and of the Labour party in the period from c.1931-1951 in particular, emphasises its centralising tendencies and collectivist nature. Historical analyses stress the party's commitment, from the 1930s, to achieving the transition to socialism through a strategy of state planning: planning of industrial development and production, investment, and so on. This strategy, it is argued, was forged in the combined heat of the political debacle of 1931 and the economic dislocation of depression. Under these pressures the Labour party was inclined to turn away from inconclusive ethical statements of fellowship and 'organic wholeness'¹⁹, and towards the mechanisms of social and economic redistribution.²⁰ The policies of the Attlee governments of 1945-51, particularly the nationalisation programmes, are seen as the implementation (or alternatively a feeble mimicry), of this strategy. Moreover, it has often been argued, most recently by Steven Fielding, that the Labour party's post-war programme was based on 'popular passivity' and that 'except as a general and vague

¹⁸ Oldfield, 'Citizenship: An Unnatural Practice', 178. In this article Oldfield explores the differences between the liberal individualist conception of citizenship and the civic republican version and the difficulties experienced in recent attempt to forge their combination. Too little attention, however, has been paid to the attempts to maintain their combination throughout the middle years of the twentieth century. For the republican version of civics see J.G.A. Pocock, for example, *The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, (Princeton, 1975).

¹⁹ The phrase is taken from a statement of socialism by James Ramsay MacDonald: 'Socialism marks the growth of society, not the uprising of class, the consciousness which it seeks to quicken is not one of economic class solidarity, but one of social unity and growth towards organic wholeness', *Socialism and Society*, (1905), quoted in A. Wright, *British Socialism. Socialist Thought from the 1880s to 1960s*, (1983), 77.

²⁰ See S. Brooke, *Labour's War. The Labour Party during the Second World War*, (Oxford, 1992), especially 12-33, for discussion of the impact of the 1931 political crisis on the Labour movement. The collapse from power certainly shocked many key figures in the party into advocating a radically different approach to socialism. The psychological impact of the defeat is not disputed; where this thesis departs from the prevailing historiographical orthodoxy is to question the extent and the homogeneity of Labour's embrace of planning.

principle, the party leadership had no wish to encourage the public to take a more active role.²¹ Fielding's view supports the common conclusion that the party based its programme on a centralised, expert-driven state, with control removed from the grasp of the ordinary people: a system, indeed, which explicitly denied the empowerment of ordinary citizens.²² A series of rights is deemed to have been adopted in preference to a citizenship of active participation. A dichotomy between rights and responsibilities, entitlements and empowerment is claimed: a shift in strategy and policy reflecting an ideological switch from ethical socialism to socialist planning.

Several facets of Labour historiography have contributed to this perception. There is, however, a common thread: at its core lies a concentration on the mechanisms chosen by the left for the implementation of policy. One component of this analysis is the assertion that Labour stressed participation only through the party and through electoral mechanisms. A broader understanding of participation, however, is disregarded. Michael Ignatieff, for example, makes this point: 'Postwar social democratic thinking about citizenship never pursued its rhetoric about accountability to the point of devising sanctions ordinary citizens could use to punish incompetence or unresponsiveness in the state bureaucracies. The only sanction the civic ideal envisages is to vote the rascals out...'.²³ This present thesis does not deny that Labour envisaged a key role for the party and electoral politics in fostering a participatory citizenry: at numerous points in the interwar and immediate postwar period party leaders, in particular Herbert Morrison, encouraged an expansion of individual party membership in these terms. In the 1940s, for example, the drive for increased party membership was explicitly linked to the positive relationship the party had developed with a wide cross-section of the electorate and it was hoped that this relationship could be cemented and further activated through

²¹ S. Fielding, "'Don't Know and Don't Care': Popular Political Attitudes in Labour's Britain, 1945-51", in N. Tiratsoo, *The Attlee Years*, (1991), 107. Fielding's view has shifted somewhat away from this analysis in more recent work, see his 'Labourism in the 1940s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 3, (1992), 138-153.

²² Fielding, "'Don't Know and Don't Care': Popular Political Attitudes in Labour's Britain, 1945-51", 120.

²³ Ignatieff, 'Citizenship and Moral Narcissism', 69.

such formalised bonds as membership.²⁴ Where this thesis does differ from many existing analyses, however, is in seeing interest in party membership as but one strategy, among several, of increasing participation.²⁵

A further and associated view maintains that Labour was not alarmed by, or wary of, bureaucratic structures, but rather this situation followed logically from the Fabian trust in expertise. This thesis scrutinizes this interpretation and proposes that it stems in part from a one-dimensional, and hence misleading, interpretation of Fabian thought.²⁶ In general terms, contributions to this historiography place stress on structures rather than ideas or ideology, on the execution of policy rather than on the intentions 'which gave it life.'²⁷ The period of the Attlee years has been particularly susceptible to this approach, the dominant argument being that Attlee's Labour Party failed, for one reason or another, to carry an ideology of socialism into practical social and economic reform. The details of this analysis vary and include charges of the party's irresolute and flimsy commitment to ideological socialism as well as assertions that, as a party of government, Labour gave priority to what Geoffrey Foote has termed the 'administration of corporate socialism'.²⁸

²⁴ See for example the pamphlet, *Labour's Call to Labour's Voters*, (1945), quoted in S. Fielding *et al*, "England Arise!" *The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain*, (Manchester, 1995), 94-5, 170; Labour Party, *Build Your Own Future. A Citizen's Guide to Effective Politics*, (1944).

²⁵ Ignatieff, 'Citizenship and Moral Narcissism', 69; Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', 145-6.

²⁶ See R. Currie, *Industrial Politics*, (Oxford, 1979) for an analysis of Fabian thought which stresses the presence of individualistic strands of thought. See S. and B. Webb, *A Constitution for the Commonwealth of Great Britain*, (1920). Also see the influence of J.A. Hobson on sections of the Labour party, reflected in the continued interest in finding means to empower the citizen as a consumer. N. Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians: Two Roads to Socialism in the 1920s', *History of Political Economy*, 26, (1994), 202-20 explores Hobson's interest in the consumer but, given its chronological framework, does not explore the longer-term significance of his ideas. For a brief indication of this see E. Durbin, *New Jerusalems. The Labour Party and the Economics of Democratic Socialism*, (1985) on Evan Durbin's interest in combining planning with freedom for the consumer, 268. This is certainly an area that would benefit from further study.

²⁷ Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', 153.

²⁸ For examples of the first see, for example, R. Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism*, (1961); J.Hinton, *Labour and Socialism*, (Brighton, 1983); for the latter see, G. Foote,

The Attlee years, therefore, have tended to be regarded as ideologically sterile; the postwar programme confined within the 'conceptions and ideas formed over the previous forty years'.²⁹ The ideas which informed and shaped discussion of the various mechanisms of policy, by contrast, have not received concerted or comprehensive examination.³⁰ The re-evaluation adopted in this study, therefore, proposes a different analysis, focusing instead on the discussion of ideas that lay behind the formation of policies. In essence it suggests that the language used to frame ideas for policy may reveal a more complicated picture than has often been expressed.

The issue of 'planning' offers a pertinent example. Numerous studies stress the centrality of the idea of planning to Labour's programme and policy strategy, yet the meanings attributed to this term are barely uncovered.³¹ The diversity of the appeal of planning has been acknowledged in recent historical writing, its extension across the boundaries of party has been firmly established in several discussions of the corporatist dimension of post-1931 politics.³² The catholicity of the notion of planning was

The Labour Party's Political Thought: a History, (1985), 191. A. Shonfeld claims that Labour's commitment to socialist planning declined as the result of an 'intellectual failure', which could not bring planning beyond the level of rhetoric, *British Economic Policy since the War*, (Harmondsworth, 1959 edn.), 169.

²⁹ Foote, *The Labour Party's Political Thought*, 192. This analysis is also linked to the consensus debate. See, for example, P. Addison, *The Road to 1945*, (1975).

³⁰ See, for example, the detailed examination of the legislation of the Attlee years in K.O. Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945-1951*, (Oxford, 1984). M. Francis, 'Labour Policies and Socialist Ideas: the example of the Attlee government', (University of Oxford, D.Phil. thesis, 1992) challenges this approach. See also Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', in which he asserts that 'it is possible that ideology has played a greater role in giving shape to Labour's sense of purpose than has hitherto been considered', 139.

³¹ See for example Foote, *The Labour Party's Political Thought*. Foote denotes Labour's ideology in the 1930s as 'corporate socialism'. Yet, as Brooke has noted, this term fails to give due weight to the liberal concerns which also infused Labour thought in the interwar years. See Brooke, *Labour's War*, 20; see also Freedman, *Liberalism Divided*.

³² Harold Macmillan's interest in the strategy of planning during the 1930s expressed through his involvement with the Industrial Reorganisation League and The Next Five Years Group reveals the involvement of Conservative politicians and businessmen in this matter. See J. Turner, *Macmillan*, (Harlow, 1994), 25-6, 33-7; A. Marwick, 'Middle Opinion in the 1930s: Planning, Progress and Political Agreement', *English Historical Review*, 79, (1964), 285-98; J. Tomlinson, 'Planning. Debate and Policy in the 1940s',

recognised by contemporaries, as well as by historians, as stemming from its indefinite boundaries: the left-liberal writer Cecil Delisle Burns, for example, argued 'that word has become a sacred symbol without exact meaning'.³³ However, sensitivity to the variety of interpretations of planning across party lines is not replicated in studies of the social and political thought of the Labour party.³⁴ Planning is too often regarded as a single, *dirigiste* policy in the hands of Labour, adopted by socialists inspired by its promise of efficient distribution of resources and the Soviet example.³⁵ This analysis is incomplete and misleading. 'Planning' was undoubtedly something of a 'lingua franca' to the post-1931 Labour Party, a short-hand notation for the rational ordering of economic and social

Twentieth Century British History, 3, (1992), 154-74; D. Ritschel, 'A Corporatist Economy in Britain? Capitalist planning for industrial self-government in the 1930s', *English Historical Review*, 106, (1991), 41-65. Ritschel is right to note that beyond a wide agreement on the principle of planning, profound disagreement existed on the 'precise nature of the planned economy', a tension largely based on 'the proposed distribution of power' within the general corporatist structure, 42; Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, 351-63; J. Pinder (ed.), *Fifty Years of Political and Economic Planning: Looking Forward, 1931-81*, (1981).

³³ Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, 352, 355. Freeden suggests that different users of 'planning' located it within, or developed it from, distinct 'idea-environments'. Thus, he argues, 'overlapping ideological positions, sharing adjacent and peripheral concepts but with different cores may create the semblance of consensus or ideological convergence; time and a closer look usually prove these illusory', 15.

³⁴ Tomlinson's detailed analysis of notions of planning within the Labour government economic and planning advisory sections in his article 'Planning: Debate and Policy in the 1940s' and S. Brooke, 'Problems of "Socialist Planning": Evan Durbin and the Labour Government of 1945', *Historical Journal*, 34, (1991), 687-702 and E. Durbin *New Jerusalems*, are something of an exception.

³⁵ Certain key contemporaries, however, such as the economist and head of the government's Economic Section in 1945-6 James Meade, rightly recognised that planners across the party political spectrum could be categorized in, at least, three ways: in Meade's classification these were the Hayekian advocates of *laissez faire*, the Liberal-Socialist position typified by himself, and the 'Gosplanners'. Yet, it seems that Meade too was too quick to categorize some of the Labour government as 'Gosplanners'. His identification of Cripps as a over-zealous planner certainly accorded with his fondness for the rhetoric of state planning yet as Tomlinson argues, 'beyond this he [Cripps] probably had the most developed notion of democratic planning and its implications for industry of anyone in the Attlee government', Tomlinson, 'Planning: Debate and Policy in the 1940s', 166-8.

priorities. Nevertheless, the hybrid nature of 'planning' must be acknowledged.³⁶ The strategy of planning encompassed a variety of interpretations, a compound of approaches which were liable to change and restatement. As a 'lingua franca', the discourse of planning could provide a verbal bridge for people of different "mother tongues", that is, those schooled in different political traditions, in different versions of British socialism. Yet a mechanism which facilitates mutual understanding, it could be argued, might also tend to gloss over details and substitute broad unity for precision. Attention to the contemporary interest in the strategy of planning and to the mechanisms chosen by the Labour Party to deliver policy according to its precepts has been useful in alerting historians to Labour's interest in the structures of government and of economic policy.³⁷ But has the identification of Labour's interest in control and efficiency been too readily equated with a concomitant disregard for the ethical or communitarian considerations of socialism?³⁸ Are we assuming too complete a transition, in both temporal and in ideological terms: is too rigid or too complete a watershed attributed to the political and economic trauma of 1931?

The developing historiography of the emergence and growth of the Labour Party as an independent political force is leading scholars to a more thorough examination of the interplay of elements of socialist thought and elements of liberalism and radicalism.³⁹

³⁶ Brooke notes that planning became the 'lingua franca' of Labour's resurgent socialism after the political debacle of 1931, *Labour's War*, 19. A fuller treatment of the implications of the malleability of 'planning', however, is needed.

³⁷ See, for example, J.E. Cronin's discussion of the post-1931 interest in the mechanisms of physical control, particularly in the face of what seemed to be the obduracy of an economically orthodox Treasury. Cronin, *The Politics of State Expansion. War, State and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*, (New York, 1991), 123-126.

³⁸ Brooke, *Labour's War*, 17, 21.

³⁹ This is, of course, a theme which has attracted the interest of historians and political scientists across the decades. See, for example, G.D.H. Cole, *A Guide to the Elements of Socialism*, (1947), 27; A. Ulam, *Philosophical Foundations of English Socialism*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1951); Tawney, *The Attack*, 165-6; A.M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918*, (Cambridge, 1962); P. Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, (Cambridge, 1978); Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*. A valuable recent examination can be found in E. Biagini and A. Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics, 1850-1914*, (Cambridge, 1991).

These interconnections particularly focus on the co-operative nature of society and are highlighted, for example, in the pre- First World War writings of James Ramsay MacDonald.⁴⁰ Utilising organic language to describe the nature of society and the state, MacDonald claimed that a reciprocal relationship existed between the individual and the state, with the latter not replacing the former but rather reinforcing its presence and enhancing its capabilities.⁴¹ The dynamics of the relationship between the individual and the state were also characterised by reciprocity: of the rights and obligations of citizenship. The 'socialist state...did not remove responsibility from people', MacDonald argued, 'because it insisted on their participation ... the state does not concern itself with man as a possessor of rights, but with man as the doer of duties.'⁴² Traditional radical notions of 'rights, justice, "fairness", independence, dignity and individual freedom' were reworked and blended with Idealist conceptions of the state.⁴³ The concomitant to this shift towards a fuller understanding of the role of the state was the continued stress on the need to maintain democratic checks on its activities. As Pat Thane has noted, 'As for earlier radicals, democracy was the inescapable route to change, but it required new institutional forms in twentieth-century conditions. The character of these institutions was

⁴⁰ See P. Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics: Radicalism, Democracy and Social Reform' and also D. Tanner, 'Radicalism, Revisionism and Socialism' both in Biagini and Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism*, 244-270, and 271-273 respectively.

⁴¹ The use of a language of organicism can be identified in many statements of political thought in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, particularly in the writing of theorists associated with the New Liberals, the Rainbow Circle and the Fabians Society. See, in particular, the writings of J.A.Hobson, for example, *The Crisis of Liberalism. New Issues of Democracy*, (1909).

⁴² J.Ramsay MacDonald, *Socialism and Government*, (1909), 11 quoted in Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics' , 268-9. The Webbs, of course, also developed a notion of 'service', though their focus was, in some sense, more narrow, focusing on the administrators of the future socialist commonwealth, Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians', 210.

⁴³ Thane sees MacDonald's involvement with the Rainbow Circle as providing an important context for his role in shifting traditional radical concepts towards a more modern socialist conception, 'Labour and Local Politics', 269. For a fuller indication of the ideas and work of the Rainbow Circle see M. Freeden (ed.) *Minutes of the Rainbow Circle, 1894-1924*, (1989). For a discussion of the Edwardian interest in Idealism see J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An Intellectual Framework for British Social Policy', *Past and Present*, 135, (1992), 116-141.

at the heart of the political debate among Labour thinkers.’⁴⁴ Yet, it has become a commonplace to assume that this sensitivity to the reciprocal and balanced relationship between the state and the individual disappeared after the First World War. Thane, for example, concludes her analysis of MacDonald’s political thought with the assessment that ‘perhaps the greatest failure of MacDonald and others in Labour and Progressive politics once they were closer to power after the First World War was that they appear not to have pursued and found effective solutions to these central problems of twentieth-century society.’⁴⁵ Other analyses have pushed further in this direction; not only is MacDonald seen as unable or unwilling to search for tangible means to build the socialist commonwealth he desired, but his political miscalculations are judged to have drawn Labour into a fundamental revision of this aspect of their ideology and, indeed, of the meaning of socialism itself.

Stephen Brooke, in one of the most detailed studies of Labour’s intellectual and political motivation in the period from c.1931-51, describes the party’s reaction to the experience of 1931 in terms of a shift in ideology.⁴⁶ The pain of the economic crisis, and of the political collapse that accompanied it, encouraged ‘tales of “bankers’ ramps” and conspiracies of capitalist forces’ determined to wreck the burgeoning strength of the British Labour movement. In this atmosphere, Brooke argues, ‘organic views of social change and social unity’, so central to MacDonald’s conception of socialism, occasioned mockery. Labour berated itself for its past naivety.⁴⁷ The rhetoric of social fellowship had failed to produce a definite strategy of material improvement; it had to be replaced by an overtly *marxisant* analysis and a detailed programme of economic planning.⁴⁸ ‘The ascendancy of planning’, Brooke continues, ‘effected a change of emphasis in Labour’s

⁴⁴ Thane, ‘Labour and Local Politics’, 269. The importance of a strong system of local government was a common feature of this argument against excessive centralisation in the Edwardian period. It remained, I would argue, a significant strand of Labour thought in the interwar and immediate postwar period. See below Part II.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 267.

⁴⁶ Brooke, *Labour’s War*, 12-33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

socialism. The argument for socialism increasingly came to rest on an economic, rather than an ethical, imperative'.⁴⁹ Yet, as Brooke himself argues, the implications of this crisis-induced re-evaluation of the way to socialism can easily be overstated, possibly leading to a fundamental misreading of Labour's ideological direction in the late interwar and immediate postwar years.

First, an unequivocal class-based analysis did not appeal to all Labour analysts, nor did it long remain the mainstream view.⁵⁰ More particularly, the demarcation of a sharp line between economic planning and ethical socialism masks the dialectic bond which existed between them. As Daunton has recently argued, 'ethical considerations continued to permeate the discourse of planning in the 1930s and 1940s, and planning was often justified as a means of permitting more rather than less participation, and allowing citizens to take charge of their lives.'⁵¹ Within a few years of 1931, the militant and purgative language of the left had dissipated, its place largely superseded by the more measured policy initiatives of the New Fabian Research Bureau economists, Evan Durbin, Hugh Gaitskell, John Parker, James Meade, Colin Clark and Douglas Jay. This group of political economists, however, have tended to be seen as advocates of 'mechanical' reform, concerned only with economic structures and detached from ethical

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 20. Brooke, for example, sees the evolution of nationalisation policy in this light, *ibid.*, 233-40. The fact that the model structure for nationalisation was to be the Morrisonian public corporation and not something that incorporated a definite commitment to workers' control is often taken as evidence enough that a shift from ethical to mechanical socialism had taken place.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, chapter 7. See also, for example, R.H. Tawney, *Equality*, (1931), quoted in *ibid.*, 19; J. Parker, *Labour Marches On*, (Harmondsworth, 1947), 13-15 and C.R. Attlee, *War Comes to Britain*, (1940), 253 quoted in Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', 143-5.

⁵¹ M. Daunton, 'Payment and Participation: Welfare and State Formation in Britain, 1900-1951', *Past and Present*, 150, (1996), 209; see also M. Francis, 'Economics and Ethics. The Nature of Labour's Socialism, 1945-1951', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, (1995), 220-43; see also the 1942 *Tribune* article by Aneurin Bevan, so often characterised as leaning towards authoritarian socialism, in which he argued for the complementarity of planning and individual freedom: postwar socialism, he asserted, 'will reconcile the needs of an ordered economic life with the fullest efflorescence of personal liberty. Without an ordered economic life the individual frustrates himself in a morass of fears and insecurities. Without personal liberty an ordered economic life is like a plant that never flowers', quoted in M. Foot, *Aneurin Bevan. A Biography*. Vol 1, (1963), 349.

debates.⁵² This is misleading, as the ideas of Evan Durbin ably demonstrate.⁵³ Having engaged in a vigorous debate with Friedrich Hayek and Lionel Robbins about the consequences of socialism and economic planning while a lecturer at the LSE in the 1930s, Durbin had begun to articulate an analysis of planning which included an explicit statement of freedom.⁵⁴ The number of voices issuing such statements increased during the war, particularly following the publication of Hayek's vehement critique of planning of 1944, *The Road to Serfdom*.⁵⁵ In general, their message was that freedom was not endangered by responsible planning, but rather by discordant capitalism. In Durbin's view capitalism itself was not fatally flawed but it did need to be guided to more egalitarian ends, modified with 'the imperatives of justice and democracy'.⁵⁶ Planning could achieve these ends. By orientating the forces of economic growth towards a more equal distribution of the nation's wealth, planning would expand economic freedom and 'accommodate individual liberty' by enabling people to shape and take responsibility for

⁵² Cronin, *The Politics of State Expansion*, 126; Brooke, *Labour's War*, 28; E. Durbin, *New Jerusalems*. See Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* for discussion of the term 'mechanical', though in this case Clark is referring to sections of the New Liberal movement, 5, 65.

⁵³ Durbin became a key member of Labour's economic policy advisors while an economics lecturer at the LSE. During the war he served in the economics section and then as Clement Attlee's personal assistant. He became an MP in 1945. See Brooke, 'Problems of "Socialist Planning"', 688-9.

⁵⁴ E.F.M. Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, (1940); Douglas Jay's *The Socialist Case*, (1937) articulates a number of similar points. As Tomlinson argues, the influence of Hayek on exponents of democratic socialism has been underestimated, 'Planning: Debate and Policy in the 1940s', 154-174. See also Brooke, *Labour's War*, 296-302.

⁵⁵ F. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, (1944); Brooke, *Labour's War*, 297-302. As Daunton has recently argued, however, it is important to note that the rising interest in the question of freedom under planning was not merely a *post hoc* reaction to Conservative criticism of the bureaucracy accompanying Labour government policy: the debate within Labour circles had already begun, 'Payment and Participation', 211. See discussions of this nature in the context of local government and individual citizen participation in society and politics below, Parts II and III.

⁵⁶ Brooke, *Labour's War*, 299; Durbin, *Politics of Democratic Socialism*, 146-8.

their own lives.⁵⁷ Liberty, equality and planning were the triad of concepts to vivify democratic socialism: the means to effect their combination in practical policy was the subject of extensive debate within the Labour party in the war and immediate postwar years.

Labour's utilisation of planning has frequently been equated, as mentioned above, with a drive towards bureaucratic statism. Consequently, notions of decentralisation are regarded as marginal and chronologically limited, either the utopian wishes of politically naive guild socialists, or the views of communitarian socialists eased out of the party leadership by centralising trade unionists and the pragmatic Arthur Henderson.⁵⁸ Yet interest in measures of decentralised administration clearly extended beyond the periphery of leftist thought to include many centrally involved in shaping policy discussion.⁵⁹ Similarly, the historiography of the interwar and postwar Labour party has insufficiently appreciated that Labour's recognition of the pressures towards centralisation did not necessarily imply a fondness for them. This is an unfortunate omission, since it is likely to distort our understanding of the interaction between Labour thought and ideology and the shape of the emerging welfare state. Several key Labour spokesmen, including Ramsay MacDonald, G.D.H.Cole, and Herbert Morrison, issued numerous reminders to the party and the nation that centripetal pressures needed to be confronted and analysed precisely so that they did not lead to a reduction of democratic accountability.⁶⁰ The chief problem for the interwar and postwar Labour Party was not blindness to the issue of participation in an age characterised by increasingly complex and large-scale social

⁵⁷ See, for example, the views of Harold Laski on the interaction between liberty, equality and planning in his *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, (1943). See also Tawney, *Equality*; Labour Party, *The Old World and the New Society*, (1942), 3.

⁵⁸ J.S. Rowett, 'Labour Party and Local Government: Theory and Practice in the Inter-War Years', (University of Oxford, D.Phil. thesis, 1979), 112, 282, 354, 356-8. Labour's swift rise to national office, he suggests, negated the building up of local government power as a surrogate. Rowett also points to structural reasons for the neglect of decentralised solutions. The unitary nature of the British state, and the consequent lack of 'inter-penetration of local and national elites in the manner of France', is argued to have discouraged exploration of devolution of power and initiative.

⁵⁹ See below, Part II.

⁶⁰ See below, Part II.

organisation: this feature of modern living was recognised and policies were framed to address its consequences. The difficulty instead lay in the barriers to their implementation, in the complicated 'interplay of interests and the structures of government' and in the fact 'that the electorate showed itself more interested in consumption and affluence than in active citizenship'.⁶¹ Even these structural and behavioural questions, however, were recognised by certain members of the Labour Party.⁶² For example, Herbert Morrison, so often 'stereotyped as a utilitarian technocrat', stressed the importance of citizen contribution to the development of a true socialist community.⁶³ His advocacy of a period of consolidation in nationalisation policy should be regarded in this light. Now that the institutional framework for socialism was in place, he argued, it was time to test whether the 'ideals and purposes which were enshrined in the legislation are to become a living reality, or whether human imperfections will convert the dream of the reformers into just another bit of bureaucratic routine.' The state had delivered what it could be expected to; it was now the 'citizen's task to match the new legislation with a new spirit and a new effort'.⁶⁴ From the later 1940s, party members, Fabian researchers and other supporters of Labour's social vision, explored ways of invigorating the interaction of citizens and the state. A positive role for voluntary co-operation and action, the increase of information services and public relations and the development of a sense of citizenship that explicitly focused on consumption, were seen

⁶¹ Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 212. The disinterested response of the citizens themselves was crucial since so much of the argument that freedom could be accommodated within planning rested upon the assumption that the public would be willing to participate in the new multiform democracy. Brooke, *Labour's War*, 285.

⁶² Durbin, for example, recognised the practical difficulties of effecting democratic planning in the context of the manpower shortages of the early postwar years. See Brooke, "'Problems of Socialist Planning'", 689, 691.

⁶³ Francis, 'Labour Policies and Socialist Ideas', 63-4. Stafford Cripps, equally, if not more readily, associated with a technocratic, economistic approach to socialism, similarly explored the democratic and participatory nature of planning which, according to Tomlinson, 'owed much more to a tripartite style of industrial co-operation than to Soviet-style central planning', 'Planning: Debate and Policy in the 1940s', 168.

⁶⁴ H. Morrison, *The Peaceful Revolution*, (1949), 45-6, quoted in Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', 150-1.

as potential aids for what many saw as the second stage of the socialist project.⁶⁵ That the problems were not constructively resolved should not detract from the earnestness of the attempt. This study proposes to focus on the rhetorical use of notions of citizenship in both policy discussions and in more general political debates. The details of specific policy outcomes, therefore, are not the chief concern of this thesis, although some explanation will be given of why certain avenues, seemingly pertinent to Labour's conception of citizenship, were not accepted and implemented.

The historiography of the Labour movement has not been the only area of scholarship to locate an ideological breach between the two interwar decades. Jose Harris, for example, addresses this theme in her recent analysis of the contribution of Idealist thought to social policy between c1880s and 1930s. For a considerable time, she asserts, the Idealist perspective provided 'a popular idiom and legitimizing framework for modern social policy and the growth of the welfare state'.⁶⁶ At the centre of this nexus lay a generalised acceptance of the Idealist conception of society and state: more than mechanisms for material growth, society and the state were expressions of real moral and spiritual bonds. As the philosopher Henry Jones noted in 1919, 'the power of the good state empowers the citizen and the power of the good citizen empowers the state.'⁶⁷ A

⁶⁵ The re-surfacing of interest in using the desire of citizens to consume to help build a democratic socialism perhaps reflects the enduring influence of some of the ideas of J.A.Hobson on sections of the Labour party. Thompson has suggested that Hobson lost the ear of the Labour party on this issue in 1928 but, perhaps, the eclipse of his voice has been overdrawn. This area merits further research. Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians'.

⁶⁶ Harris rightly notes that ideas about social welfare 'can migrate unexpectedly across the political spectrum'. Idealism, for example, has often been equated with reaction and conservatism yet, as Harris notes, 'it did not create a single political orthodoxy within academic departments of social science or with social-reform societies.' Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State'. 139, 119, 126.

⁶⁷ H. Jones, *The Principles of Citizenship*, (1919), 89 quoted in A. Vincent and R. Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship. The Life and Thought of the British Idealists*, (Oxford, 1984), 26. Henry Jones was brought up in a non-conformist environment in Wales. Intellectually, he was influenced by the thought of Edward Caird, whom he succeeded as Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University, a post he held from 1894 until his death in 1922. *Principles of Citizenship* was written for soldiers' classes in France during the war. Jones was also interested in educational reform.

key part of the relationship between political progressives and Idealist thought, therefore, rests on a shared acceptance of the state as a benign and inherently moral force, the repository of man's idea of good and of the citizens' ethical heritage. Certainly, commentators felt the pertinence of this frame of reference for contemporary politics. For example, Ernest Barker, the first Professor of Political Science at Cambridge from 1927 and an avid seeker of practical as well as abstract expressions of community reformation, noted of the philosophy of T.H.Green, interwar Idealism's main source, 'what matters is rather his principles than his analysis of a particular policy. If his principles are true, each age can progressively interpret their meaning to suit his own needs.'⁶⁸ The leading figures of the emerging Labour party were, undoubtedly, affected by this intellectual framework. Indeed, as Harris notes 'Many members of the infant Labour Party - James Ramsay MacDonald, R.H.Tawney, Clement Attlee, Arthur Greenwood, even the practical and pragmatic Arthur Henderson - were influenced by and prominent exponents of' the Idealist conception of the complementarity of state action and individual self-fulfilment, and advocates of a reciprocal relationship between the state and the individual as a bond of ethical as well as material benefit.⁶⁹ The impact of the left and centre left's

⁶⁸ E. Barker, *Political Thought in England 1848-1914*, (Oxford, 1951), 46 quoted in Vincent and Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*, 61. Barker was a wide-ranging and influential theorist of the English nation who, as the first incumbent of the Chair of Political Science at Cambridge, wrote extensively on the history of political thought and on political philosophy. His writings are imbued with a strong cultural sense of nationhood and combine three of the dominant strands of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century political thought, Idealism, Pluralism and Whiggism. Barker had been exposed to Idealist thought while an undergraduate at Balliol College in the 1890s where the legacy of Green remained strong, perpetuated through the new Master, Edward Caird. Barker's writings and activities, for instance as a leading figure of the National Council for Social Service, also influenced a wide non-academic audience. See E. Barker, *Age and Youth, Memories of Three Universities and Father of the Man*, (1953), 318; J. Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics. The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker*, (Cambridge, 1994).

⁶⁹ Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', 133-4. See also the comment by L.T. Hobhouse on an early article by Attlee which affirmed, in his mind, the connections between the social liberalism of T.H. Green and 'the ethical socialism described by Major Attlee', 'What is Socialism?', *Manchester Guardian*, 10 June 1924, cited in Freedon, *Liberalism Divided*, 327. While at Oxford, Attlee was taught by Ernest Barker and, according to Attlee's biographer, he found Barker 'the most stimulating of all his teachers', T. Burridge, *Clement Attlee*, (1985), 18. Barker also taught Laski. The bond

relationship with Idealist thought, Harris argues, was enduring: 'much of the public moral discourse about social welfare in the 1940s and 1950s continued to echo idealist or quasi-idealist themes'.⁷⁰ However, by this stage the intellectual eclipse of Idealism had already set in, dislodged by the mid-1930s torrent of linguistic positivism, Freudian psychology, functionalist sociology and by Marxism.⁷¹ More than the failure of an academic fashion, the decline of Idealist thought 'took with it much of the intellectual capital of those who had built up the British social services and were in the process of constructing the British welfare state'.⁷² Yet, the lag between the mid-1930s loss of intellectual initiative and the postwar dwindling of Idealism's rhetorical and political impact is of great significance to the history of Labour's political and social thought, and would benefit from further exploration.⁷³ In particular, the political manifestations of the delayed rejection of the Idealist frame of reference need greater attention. The connections between social policy and moral, social and political theory may have attenuated in the postwar period as Harris suggests, but the significance of the bonds that remained require attention. Without such an examination, the separation of practical sociology from political philosophy in the period c1931-1951 can be overstated. Harris herself points to the presence of Richard Titmuss at the LSE, the 'apostolic successor' of the Idealist Edward Urwick as head of the department of social science, whose 'social philosophy...was full of muffled resonances of the idealist discourse of the Edwardian age'.⁷⁴ Yet Titmuss's sociology was

between Idealist thought and Labour politics was demonstrated in practice when, in 1938 the Idealist moral philosopher and Master of Balliol College, Oxford, A.D. Lindsay stood as the Labour Party candidate for Oxford in the 1938 by-election. See also, B. Harrison, 'Oxford and the Labour Movement', *Twentieth Century British History*, 2, (1991), 229.

⁷⁰ Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', 136-7.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 137.

⁷³ Harris asserts that the political impact of the demise of academic idealism 'was not, of course, fully evident for many years', but the weight of her argument leads to the view that the significant break had already occurred by the early 1930s, *ibid.*, 137.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* There is a danger that the wider significance of Titmuss's approach and attitudes is liable to underestimation if explained merely by reference to the Urwickian legacy at the LSE.

characterised by much of the functionalist, statistical positivism which Harris argues contributed to the decline of Idealism.⁷⁵ For Titmuss, however, 'all that research and enquiry could do was to identify options: the real issue' remained 'the values that determined the objectives of policy'.⁷⁶ The overarching themes of mutuality between individual and community, and of the centrality of values and morality in policy-making for instance, are apparent in Titmuss's works right up to his death in the 1973.⁷⁷ In addition, his was neither a lone, nor a particularly maverick voice. The ideas and work of the sociologist Michael Young, for example, can be seen as further evidence of the continued connections between political and social philosophy and practical social policy. While working for the Research Department of the Labour Party, Young asserted the importance of infusing socialism with ethical as well as material aims. He recognised the difficulties of translating this synthesis into concrete policy but suggested that social science might be able to offer a direction and bring clarity 'to the emotionally inspired aims of socialism: Can social science now assist the unpractical men, the dreamers, and show the practical men the way forward?'⁷⁸ This willingness to corroborate the precepts

⁷⁵ Harris, 'Political Thought and the State', in S.J.D.Green and R.C.Whiting (eds.), *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain*, (Cambridge, 1996), 26.

⁷⁶ A. Deacon, 'The Dilemmas of Welfare: Titmuss, Murray and Mead', in Green and Whiting (eds.), *The Boundaries of the State*, 197; S.M. Miller, 'The Legacy of Richard Titmuss', in B. Abel-Smith and K.Titmuss (eds.), *The Philosophy of Welfare: Selected Writings of Richard M. Titmuss*, (1987), 6-8.

⁷⁷ See, for example R. Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship. From Human Blood to Social Policy*, (1970) which discusses the importance of altruism in society in the context of the voluntary blood donation programme. Titmuss described the blood transfusion service as 'a practical and concrete demonstration' of Tawney's notion of fellowship, *The Gift Relationship*, 242-3, quoted in Deacon, 'The Dilemmas of Welfare', 200.

⁷⁸ M. Young, 'What Might have Been?', *New Society*, 2 November 1972, 262. This article is a reprint of a policy document, 'Social Science and the Labour Party Programme', written by Young for the policy committee of the Labour Party in 1949. This document does not seem to have survived in the party records. Young became increasingly convinced of the importance of sociological research for further political reform. After Attlee's defeat in 1951 he returned to the LSE, where he had been an economics undergraduate, as a graduate student to work under Titmuss in the Department of Social Administration. His PhD thesis was to be the core of the book written in conjunction with Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, (1957). See also E. Shils, 'On the Eve: a Prospect. In Retrospect', in M. Bulmer (ed.) *Essays on the*

of ethical socialism with the fruits of social science research can also be seen among the New Fabian group of politicians and political writers in the early 1950s.⁷⁹ Jose Harris has argued that a breach occurred between the intellectual framework and practical expressions of social and political thought from the early to mid-1930s, a different though parallel statement of a watershed, which perhaps underestimates the elements of continuity, and interrelationship, between interwar, wartime and postwar political thought and practice.⁸⁰

The benefit of a growing interest in the history of social policy and social thought has been a greater awareness of the variety of, and indeed the interconnections between, contemporary attitudes to the structure and formation of society. In the first half of the twentieth century the idea of 'the mass' was confronted, and by the interwar years a fundamental re-definition of the individual nature, and the social role, of ordinary men and women was undoubtedly emerging. Within this framework, recent scholarship has tended to emphasise the continuation of mutual suspicion between the lower sections of society and the rest during this period of Britain's social and political history. Ross McKibbin's work has been seminal in the development of this approach.⁸¹ A clear division between 'the public' and labour, forged in the early interwar years by mutual suspicion and fostered by economic and industrial tensions is perceived. The main thrust

History of British Sociological Research, (Cambridge, 1985), 165-78. See also the works of some of Titmuss's LSE colleagues, such as, Brian Abel-Smith, Peter Townsend, John Vaizey, David Donnison, which tended to link an ethical vision of egalitarian fellowship with detailed sociological research and statistical analyses.

⁷⁹ See, for example, the R.H.S. Crossman (ed.), *New Fabian Essays*, (1952); see also the papers of the Fabian-sponsored Buscot conferences, Cole Papers, D114-16.

⁸⁰ Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State'. Harris's study does, however, offer a welcome jolt out of the conventional periodisation which pairs the social thought of the 1880s with the political experience of the pre-First World War years by suggesting that many points of continuity can be found in the social policy discourse in the 1920s.

⁸¹ R. McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class. Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950*, (Oxford, 1990). See also A. Olechnowicz, 'The Economic and Social Development of Interwar Out-county Municipal Housing Estates, with Special Reference to the London County Council's Becontree and Dagenham Estate', (University of Oxford, D.Phil. thesis, 1991) for a comparable analysis in the particular context of housing and town planning policy.

of McKibbin's argument is to explain the interwar electoral success of the Conservative party through this status alignment, but his argument has far wider implications. It implies that the predominance of a segregationist analysis of society, an 'us and them' mentality, was as common among labour interests as among 'the public', and embedded through different cultural traditions and social attitudes. This interpretation, however, fails to incorporate the significance of an alternative understanding of society articulated, at least, within academic and reformist circles. This analysis of society asserted that mutual suspicion was fed by social polarity. A rhetoric of integration and co-operation dominated this argument, emerging in concert with an environmental explanation of the social and economic position of the working classes.⁸² This alternative prescription of social progress has, at best, a patchy historiography.⁸³ A valuable corpus of research outlining the ideals of leading advocates for integrative environmental reform and their moves to achieve their aims does exist but, in general, has not been brought within the wider social and intellectual and political history of the period.⁸⁴ This thesis incorporates the still rather detached historiography of town planning and preventive and community medicine

⁸² D. Porter, "'Enemies of the Race': Biologism, Environmentalism, and Public Health in Edwardian Britain', *Victorian Studies*, 4, (1991), 159-78, for example, examines the broadening of late Victorian public health concerns along these lines. Housing and town planning, nutrition and infant welfare became key arenas for debate. Also see M. Freedman, *The New Liberalism. An Ideology of Social Reform*, (Oxford, 1978), 88-9, 170-94. The Liberal sociologist, L.T.Hobhouse was a firm exponent of this viewpoint of society and social evolution, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, (New York, 1911), 191, *Liberalism* (1911), *Metaphysical Theories of the State. A Criticism*, (1918). See below, chapters 2 and 3, for discussion of practical expressions of ideas of environmental determinism in these fields.

⁸³ It has, for example, received a far less comprehensive or cohesive examination than 'biological' explanations of social organisation. Historians have tended to focus on public attitudes towards the very lowest in society, the residuum, and on proposals for their control and containment. See, for example, G. Jones, *Social Hygiene in Twentieth Century Britain*, (1986), which argues for the strong influence of eugenic thought on British social policy. See also G.R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain 1900-1914*, (Leyden, 1976) and *The Quest for National Efficiency. A Study in British Politics and Political Thought 1899-1914*, (Oxford, 1971). Porter, however, has demonstrated the resilience of environmentalist public health strategies in the face of eugenic arguments, see Porter, "'Enemies of the Race'".

⁸⁴ Porter's, "'Enemies of the Race'" and Harris', 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', however, have begun to breakdown this isolation.

into an analysis of the ideas and social thought of the Labour party within the context of debates on human potential, citizenship and equality.

The Labour party's interest in fostering a community of active participants and the means by which they attempted to achieve this in practice is the focus of this thesis. Comprehensiveness is not claimed; there are clear parameters to the study. First, the analysis has a firmly metropolitan focus: contemporaries, concerned about the future direction of society and the economy in Britain, found London's particularly strong engagement with the forces of modernity of considerable interest and, indeed, often regarded the capital's experience as the key to a more generalised understanding of the nation's difficulties and potentialities. Moreover, the study is directed at a political, intellectual and professional elite who aligned themselves with Labour or who expressed a certain sympathy with Labour's project.⁸⁵ It includes not only the Labour leadership and their younger adjutants, but also academics who contributed directly or indirectly to Labour policy debates, for example, G.D.H.Cole, R.H.Tawney, Harold Laski, W.A.Robson, and other researchers among Fabian Society and Political and Economic Planning (PEP).⁸⁶ PEP was set up in 1931, in the context of what Max Nicholson, its first director, saw as 'a world apparently on the point of falling apart.'⁸⁷ It was a product of the perceived need to reorganise the economy, industry and social services along systematic and planned lines. Its members, nearly all men, were generally in their 30s

⁸⁵ A similar parameter is evident in the most sensitive analysis of the development of Labour's policy between 1931 and 1951 to have been published in recent years, that of Brooke, *Labour's War*. Brooke's study is 'a history of Labour at the centre rather than in the constituencies', 10. Certainly, much of the evidence utilised in this present study gives a strongly metropolitan focus. Contemporaries, concerned about the future direction of society and the economy in Britain, found London's particularly strong engagement with modernity of particular interest and, indeed, often regarded the capital's experience as the key to a more generalised understanding of the nation's difficulties and potentialities.

⁸⁶ Distinctions between the Labour left and right are not regarded as particularly helpful in this context as ideas about citizenship permeate across such labels according to circumstance or the particular views of individuals.

⁸⁷ M.Nicholson, 'Prologue', in Pinder (ed.) *Fifty Years of Political and Economic Planning*, 5.

and 40s, in or approaching positions of responsibility, who could see the enormous damage that a breakdown in the economy and society would bring.⁸⁸ Many of these people, Nicholson has argued, would have been Liberals in an earlier decade, but were left 'high and dry' by the Liberal party's split and diminution of the 1920s.⁸⁹ A significant number, however, found themselves increasingly in sympathy with the Labour party's aims; a shift that was particularly noticeable during the wartime and immediate postwar debates on reconstruction. As Michael Young remembers of this time, 'PEP outside the government became one of Labour's informal allies'.⁹⁰ In addition, key figures from the fields of healthcare and personal welfare, town planning and architecture are recognised in this thesis as being incorporated into this network of debate and reform. In adopting such an approach, this study explicitly seeks to combine analysis of theoretical and practical positions and to explore the interaction between the two.⁹¹ As Freeden has argued in the context of post-First World War liberalism, reliance on the printed statements of a select number of individual thinkers will not provide a sufficient understanding of the interaction between ideas and action. Just as interwar liberalism has 'no classics, no single book by a Mill, Green or Hobhouse', so interwar and immediate postwar Labour thinking must be drawn from a wide range of published and unpublished sources 'so as to tap what is, after all, not the product of any individual but of a number

⁸⁸ The only women who were active working members of the group at this time seem to have been Elizabeth Denby, housing consultant; Eva Hubback, feminist social reformer, and Innes Pearce, doctor and co-director of the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham.

⁸⁹ Nicholson, 'Prologue', in Pinder (ed.) *Fifty Years of Political and Economic Planning*, 5.

⁹⁰ M. Young, 'The Second World War', in *ibid.*, 89. Young's career typifies this growing closeness. Young became secretary of PEP in 1942, a post he held until joining Labour's Research Department in early 1945. He remained a member of PEP's executive until 1958.

⁹¹ Freeden's assertion of the need to interpose ideology and ideas in analyses of social policy is upheld. See his article 'Stranger at the Feast: Ideology and Public Policy in Twentieth Century Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1, (1990), 9-34. See also Francis, 'Labour Policies and Socialist Ideas', 1-6.

of interlocking groups'.⁹² In addition, this approach enables the variety of opinions on the notion of citizenship to be seen in relation to one another.

The people whose ideas and attitudes are under consideration here undoubtedly believed they had a key role to play in the dissemination of social policy ideas. This can be seen, for example, in the attitude of the founders of *Political Quarterly*, William Robson and Kingsley Martin. Not only was the review 'conceived as a device to provide a bridge between the worlds of thought and the worlds of action', it was based on a particular theory of the formation of public opinion in Britain.⁹³ As Robson explains, 'This theory rests on the belief that all or nearly all new ideas or progressive policies begin with discussions or writing among a very restricted circle of persons of exceptional ability and concentrated interests'.⁹⁴ This is, perhaps, not an unexpected statement from Robson, a Labour supporter with a Fabian's belief in the relevance of experts in shaping the contours of public life. Yet this should not blind us, as it has so often in past historical writing, to a concurrent interest in decentralised and active community participation. This is not to deny that tension existed between these viewpoints, but to urge the recognition and exploration of the co-existence of these potentially contradictory strands. A comparable duality was in evidence among those reformers and professionals, often the same people who wrote for Robson's periodical, eager to utilise the full weight of modern science to the benefit of society.⁹⁵ From the 1920s to the 1940s, the potential impact of scientific developments on society drew interest and attention from politicians

⁹² Freedon, *Liberalism Divided*, 17.

⁹³ W.A. Robson (ed.), *The Political Quarterly in the 1930s*, (1971), 10. See also Pedersen and Mandler (eds), *After the Victorians*; Pinder (ed.), *Fifty Years of Political and Economic Planning*.

⁹⁴ Robson (ed.), *The Political Quarterly in the 1930s*, 11. Robson believed this vanguard role extended and appealed not only to political researchers like himself 'but to those interested in particular spheres of policy, such as the Howard League for Penal Reform or the Town and Country Planning Association'.

⁹⁵ This, like the Fabian interest in expertise drew heavily on the precepts of the national efficiency movement of the early years of the twentieth century. See Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*; B. Semmell, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, (1960).

and others eager to raise the profile of progressive social action.⁹⁶ Many of the professionals cited in this study - for example, the architect Berthold Lubtekin, the town planner Frederic Osborn, the biologist Julian Huxley and the physician John Ryle - desired the expansion of their subjects beyond the 'confines of an academic discipline towards a wider social and political application'.⁹⁷ Two studies, Huxley's *Scientific Research and Social Needs*, and J.D.Bernal's *The Social Function of Science*, exemplified this desire to link science with radical politics and popular education and benefit.⁹⁸ The impact of this movement was increased through the development of inexpensive media sympathetic to its aims, most notably Gollancz's Left Book Club and Allen Lane's Penguin Books.⁹⁹ Yet, in spite of the earnest attempt to reach out to ordinary people and to draw science into a broader social contract, the expert, whether molecular biologist or town planner, was indispensable and, at times, didacticism and democracy blended uneasily. The complexities of the contemporary search to blend both elements in a move towards a more equal and progressive society are acknowledged and explored.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ G. Werksey, *The Visible College. A Collective Biography of British Scientists and Socialists of the 1930s*, (1988 edn.). The research organisation Mass-Observation expressed a similar, if less precise or substantial, desire to harness the benefits of modern science for the good of society. One of its founders Charles Madge had studied science at Cambridge during the early 1930s where he had come into brief contact with J.D.Bernal. In Angus Calder's view, this was 'an indirect but suggestive link with the movement, in the 1930s, to bring science and the masses together'. A.Calder, 'Mass-Observation, 1937-1949', in M.Bulmer (ed.), *Essays on the History of British Sociological Research*, 26, 128. Some of the figures involved in promoting the social uses of science, for example, Bernal and the atomic physicist, Patrick Blackett, went on to help Harold Wilson formulate his scientific platform for the election of 1964. See D. Horner, 'The Road to Scarborough: Wilson, Labour and the Scientific Revolution', in Coopey, R., Fielding, S. and Tiratsoo, N., *The Wilson Governments, 1964-1970*, (1993).

⁹⁷ J. Allan, *Berthold Lubtekin. Architecture and the Tradition of Progress*, (1992), 105.

⁹⁸ J. Huxley, *Scientific Research and Social Needs*, (1934); J.D.Bernal, *The Social Function of Science*, (1939).

⁹⁹ N. Joicey, 'A Paperback Guide to Progress: Penguin Books, 1935-c.1951', *Twentieth Century British History*, 4, (1993), 25-56.

¹⁰⁰ The tensions between didactic and the participatory ideals are explored below in the context of a number of social policy questions, particularly in the highly 'technical' area of town planning policy. See chapter 5.

The ideas of citizenship that were articulated by this group of Labour-inclined progressives are examined in the context of perceptions of the emerging relationship between the citizen and the state. Contemporary views of this relationship, however, while illustrated and given definite meaning by policy discussions, do not fit easily into discrete policy areas. Neither do they fall into distinct chronological periods; while there are identifiable peaks and troughs in party discussions of the notions of citizenship, different sections of the party and various key individuals were exploring the issue in different ways at different times. Consequently, this thesis adopts a thematic structure, an organisational approach which permits the presentation of an overall impression of the use of the concept of citizenship and the process of definition and negotiation that proceeded across the period as a whole. Consequently, continuities in patterns of thought among the Labour party from the early interwar years to the early 1950s can be illuminated and particular areas which encapsulate this complex and interesting debate highlighted.

The first part of the thesis examines the relevance of the concept of citizenship to political ideology and debate from the early years of the twentieth century to the Second World War. The core of this section is an examination of how the concept of citizenship found expression during this period. It draws upon discussions within Labour party circles, but also examines views and opinions outside this circle, from commentators from other political orientations and those who expressed their views in an explicitly apolitical context. In this way the diversity of views on citizenship and, indeed, the continuities of thought between commentators from different political backgrounds, can be established.

The remaining two parts consider, in more detail, how Labour thinkers and politicians approached the question of how to foster a dynamic relationship between citizen and state, exploring in particular, where the boundaries and bonds of citizenship were deemed to lie. Part 2, for instance, looks at how citizenship might be fostered via the local ballot box and through other expressions of the local community and, more broadly, at the consequences for citizenship of the changing relationship between the local and the central state. Part 3 focuses more directly on the bonds which exist between individual citizens and also on the role of the individual in creating an active citizenship.

In combination, therefore, the thesis explores the Labour party's articulation of

the relationships between the state, civil society and the individual citizen during a period when the nature of the state's claim over society attracted particular attention. Rather than seeing the party's contribution to this debate in terms of a rejection of participation and decentralisation in favour of mechanistic and centralised planning, the thesis presents a series of debates within the Labour party and its satellites which demonstrate an attempt to fuse efficiency with freedom in order to give people greater opportunity to take control of their own lives. Undoubtedly, various opinions existed within Labour circles as to how such a bond between planning and participation could be created and, at points, variety shaded into unconstructive dissension, diversity into practical contradiction. Also the complexity of grafting many of the suggested policies onto existing 'structural configurations' proved a major obstacle to success.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, an examination of the articulation of ideas of citizenship which lay behind many policy debates is a useful balance to analyses of policy outcomes since it enables us to evaluate with more precision the interaction between Labour's ideology, welfare policy and the shape of the postwar state.

¹⁰¹ Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 212.

PART 1:
THE SEARCH FOR THE INTEGRATED COMMUNITY

THE SEARCH FOR THE INTEGRATED COMMUNITY

This first part examines the pertinence of the concept of citizenship to political debate by exploring the development of its usage in social policy discussions from the early years of the twentieth century to the Second World War. Drawing heavily on the precepts of environmental determinism, politicians and other social commentators explored ways to foster a more coherent and integrated society, in which all members could play an active part. Such notions of citizenship and community appealed to a broad spectrum of people and, while focusing on the social theorists and practitioners who identified themselves with the left of British politics, this section will also explore the rhetoric and ideas of those who stood outside or apart from this political alignment.

The idea of citizenship as an expression of human potentiality gained considerable force during the interwar period and found several outlets for practical manifestation. In particular, town planning and housing policy and health care provision became fertile arenas for this debate. The two chapters contained within this first part will examine the contemporary search for the means to foster integrated and active communities of citizens. The first chapter will primarily focus on the physical manifestations of this search, exploring the intentions and aim of town planners and politicians from the building of Hampstead Garden Suburb to the New Towns. The second chapter will address the manifestation of a similar rhetoric and a companion desire to express citizen potentiality and community action through health and health care. In addition, both chapters explore the impact of these plans and strategies on contemporary views of the relationship between state and civil society.

2 BUILDING AN ORGANIC COMMUNITY

Interest in social science and social welfare in Edwardian and interwar Britain spread outwards from professional administrators and academics, through what Jose Harris has called ‘an interlocking, seamless web’, into a broader middle-class culture of involvement and activism expressed through a wide variety of social reform associations and civic societies. Not only did the membership of these groups overlap, with each other and with professional and academic circles such as the Sociological Society, but their motivations, intentions, and practices demonstrated a ‘continuing interaction between sociological theory, social philosophy, empirical investigation, casework and the analysis of practical social policy’.¹ More specifically, these groups and individuals, as Harris has convincingly argued, located their ideas and work within a predominately Idealist framework which encouraged the subordination of specific, problem-orientated, social policy analyses ‘to a vision of reconstructing the whole of British society, together with reform of the rational understanding and moral character of individual British citizens’.² Debates in the early- to mid-twentieth century on the problems of modern urban living, and the potential of town planning strategies to help rebuild the social fabric reflect this approach.

The nascent town planning movement in Britain contributed to the Edwardian debate on the forces of cohesion in society, drawing specific attention to the social bonds of community and neighbourhood: these valuable ties, weakened or neglected over recent years, could be fostered and re-applied through creative land use and town and housing design. Drawing personnel from an assortment of radical and progressive groups and financial backing from prominent Liberals and others with an affinity for regeneration (for efficiency, if not ethical or spiritual reasons), the movement increasingly found itself

¹ Harris, ‘Political Thought and the Welfare State’, 122; 138.

² *Ibid.*, 123. Of course, the precise relationship between the individual and the state sought by the various idealist-influenced individuals and groups could vary considerably as Harris has demonstrated, 131-5.

heard.³ Many of its ideas, if not its ideals, were imbibed, some utilised. Some proved hard-wearing and adaptable, with reformers confronted with a new period of solution-seeking in the reconstruction years of the 1940s, able to tap into an established tradition of environmentalist thought.⁴ In this chapter, the ideas of reformers and practitioners, thinkers and politicians, who confronted the challenge of rebuilding or re-invigorating social bonds through environmental change will be examined.

The garden city and town planning movement of the early twentieth century has received extensive examination in recent years but its focus has been narrow. In particular, studies have not consistently engaged with the wider social and intellectual history of the period: the town planning movement has rarely been explored as an important indicator of the changing perception of society. Assimilation of this work into the historiography of early twentieth-century social policy and ideas, therefore, is the aim of this chapter. The ideas of town planning and housing reformers throughout this period encompassed two main areas of debate: the regenerating powers of the country and the need to rehabilitate existing town life and imbue it with a civic strength. Commentators looked to the urban environment as, potentially, both the wrecker and the saviour of society's struggle to come to terms with modern life. The key to success, it was increasingly argued, lay in the sensitive development of the urban environment, be this in terms of its more thorough fusion with the countryside, or in terms of its autonomous

³ Among them was Henry Vivian, M.P., advocate of co-partnership in housing and chairman of Hampstead Tenants' Ltd. Vivian himself cites national efficiency concerns in his article on 'Garden Cities', in *Quarterly Review*, 216, (1912), 496. The Birmingham housing reform advocate, J.S.Nettlefold, part of Joseph Chamberlain's network, also cited national efficiency as one of the factors motivating his call for housing reform. See Nettlefold, *A Housing Policy*, (Birmingham, 1905) and *Practical Town Planning*, (1914), xvi, 36.

⁴ A Garden City information leaflet described town planning as 'the application to social conditions of the principles of preventive medicine', Garden City and Town Planning Association leaflet, 'No. 1. Town Planning: What is it and why it is needed', supplement to *Garden Cities and Town Planning* (n.d., c. 1925); Porter, "'Enemies of the Race'", 108-9; A. Ravetz, *Model Estate. Planned Housing at Quarry Hill, Leeds*, (1974), 10; Nettlefold, *Practical Town Planning*, 36, 82-3; Freedon, *The New Liberalism*, 88-9, 170-85. Many early twentieth century Fabians set their moves for social reform within this environmentalist framework. See for example, S. Webb, 'The Policy of the National Minimum', *Independent Review*, 3, (1904), 163, R.A. Bray, *The Town Child*, (1907), 65. Also see above, page 32.

regeneration. This chapter will examine how both strands contributed to an emerging rhetoric of community and citizenship which influenced town planning policy from its first national legislative expression in 1909 to the passage of the New Towns Act by the Attlee government in 1946.⁵

Within the first strand of thought a common attitude, and one with a long tradition in radical thought, was concern for the depopulation of rural areas.⁶ Among radicals this stance was often accompanied by the notion of a past 'golden age' in which freedom to own and work on land of one's choice and to enjoy its produce was an important feature. The independence of the working man was the crucial core of this body of thought. Industrialism, it was argued, had adversely altered man's relations to man and to Nature. The message of Carlyle, often distilled through the works of John Ruskin and William Morris, was remembered.⁷ Yet, the depopulation of the land had other, more prosaic, implications for society. In the early years of the twentieth century, it was judged by many progressive thinkers and politicians as one of the prime causes of unemployment and distress, and its rectification was urgently sought. Too many people, it was suggested, were leaving a countryside unable to house and support them, seeking an alternative life

⁵ For a discussion of the passage of the first piece of national town planning legislation see P. Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, (Oxford, 1988), 53; D. Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns. Campaigning for Town and Country Planning 1899-1946*, (1991).

⁶ The pioneer town planner Ebenezer Howard was certainly affected by this question, commenting on the issue in an early lecture, 'Commonsense Socialism', 1892. He saw better redistribution of the population as the key to energizing the whole nation. See R. Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia. A Critical Biography of Ebenezer Howard*, (1988), 31.

⁷ Carlyle was regarded as something of a sage in the 1880s. William Morris, in particular, was strongly influenced by his medieval histories, absorbing the Carlylean message in conjunction with the writings of John Ruskin. See, for example, F. MacCarthy, *William Morris. A Life for Our Times*, (1994), 70-1. For Ruskin, see the growth of biographical interest around the turn of the century, for example, J.A. Hobson, *John Ruskin. Social Reformer*, (1898); P. Geddes, *John Ruskin Economist*, (1884); E.T. Cook, *Studies in Ruskin: Some Aspects of the Work and Teaching of John Ruskin*, (1890); H.C.G. Matthew, 'Hobson, Ruskin and Cobden', in M. Freedon (ed.) *Reappraising J.A. Hobson. Humanism and Welfare*, (1990), 16-22. Hobson's interest in Ruskin is particularly interesting as it can be seen as an attempt to fuse Ruskinian organicism with Cobdenite individualism, a difficult task, but one which, in Hobson's hands, produces an strong emphasis on the rights of citizens as consumers in a manner, reminiscent of Morris. For Hobson this led to his advocacy of the 'living wage'. See Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians', 208-9.

in the already crowded cities and towns. Urban property, often jerry-built, was growing increasingly overcrowded and unhealthy. National degeneration through the immolation of the robust country stock was feared.⁸ Political and intellectual debates reverberated with apprehension for urban poverty and housing chaos.⁹ For radical liberals and socialists, the issue was subsumed within a wider debate on the nature of the state's claim over the nation's resources and, more particularly, on the distorting system of Rent. To Fabian socialists Rent signified that portion of income 'which accrued to its recipient without work or sacrifice on his part, without cost to him'.¹⁰ The 'unearned increment' in land, in particular, struck a chord among many Edwardian progressives and the land question was regarded as the unavoidable corollary of substantial social reform.¹¹ A traditional concern of radicals, the land question thus became a vibrant political issue in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹² Its pertinence to broad political questions, not least to the crucial issue of national wealth distribution, assured the land question a prominent platform.¹³ Though waning from its Edwardian height, the land question

⁸ See, for example, the view of Lord Rosebery as cited by E. Howard, in his *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, (1902), 11.

⁹ E.P. Hennock, 'Poverty and Social Theory in England', *Social History*, 1, (1976), 67-91; Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, 241-5.

¹⁰ D. Ricci, 'Fabian Socialism: a Theory of Rent as Exploitation', *Journal of British Studies*, 9, (1970), 106.

¹¹ For many 'progressives', the land question lay at the root of society's problems. See, for example, the speech of the Labour MP for Glasgow Blackfriars, G.N. Barnes, *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 1, 97-8. James Ramsay MacDonald shared a similar view of the land question as the 'root of our social difficulties'. See MacDonald, *The New Charter: A Programme for Working Class Politics*, (Dover, 1892) quoted in Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics', 262; Fabian Tract, no. 30, *The Unearned Increment*, (1891).

¹² See A. Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914: Landownership, Law, Ideology and Urban Development in England*, (Cambridge, 1981); R. Douglas, *Land, People and Politics. The Land Question in the United Kingdom, 1878-1952*, (1976).

¹³ See, for example, H.V. Emy, 'The Land Campaign: Lloyd George as a Social Reformer 1906-1914', in A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George: Twelve Essays*, (1971); H.V. Emy, 'The Impact of Financial Policy on English Party Politics before 1914', *Historical Journal*, 15, (1972), 103-31; B. Gilbert, 'David Lloyd George: Land, the Budget and Social Reform', *American History Review*, 81, (1976).

remained an integral part of the discourse on citizenship and community throughout the period. It was embedded in the politics of national wealth distribution in the 1920s, an issue fuelled by both Labour and Liberal parties, and emerged, amid the destruction of the Battle of Britain, as a central issue in the reconstruction debates of the 1940s.¹⁴ The rhetoric of community and citizenship, though evolving and changing, is present throughout.

At the turn of the century Ebenezer Howard sought to repair what he, and many others, saw as the damage to society wrought by nineteenth-century industrialisation and urbanisation by establishing a new principle for town design: 'Town and country must be married, and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilisation.'¹⁵ Howard's new garden cities were to be 'Social Cities', self-contained entities offering inhabitants a home, work and community amenities; a corrective to old cities which were 'unadapted for a society in which the social side of our nature is demanding a larger share of recognition.'¹⁶ (Figure 1). The benefits to be accrued by society were foremost in his analysis. At its base lay the traditional symbol of community: the common entitlement to the land. Howard regarded land reform as 'the foundation on which all other reforms must be built.'¹⁷ This facet of Howard's work and its influence upon the political context of town planning policy, however, has received

¹⁴ The implications of this will be discussed in relation to the changing relationship between local and central government in Part II. See also, J. Yelling, 'Planning and the Land Question', *Planning History*, 16, 1, (1994), 4-9.

¹⁵ E. Howard, *Tomorrow, A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, (1898), 10, reprinted as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, (1902).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, (1898), 135.

¹⁷ Quoted in R. Beevers, *Garden Cities and New Towns*, (1990), 26. Howard argued that socialists professing their intention to make society the owner of land and of all instruments of production, have been 'so anxious to carry both points of their programme that they have been a little too slow to consider the special importance of the land question, and thus have missed the true path of reform.'

GARDEN - CITY

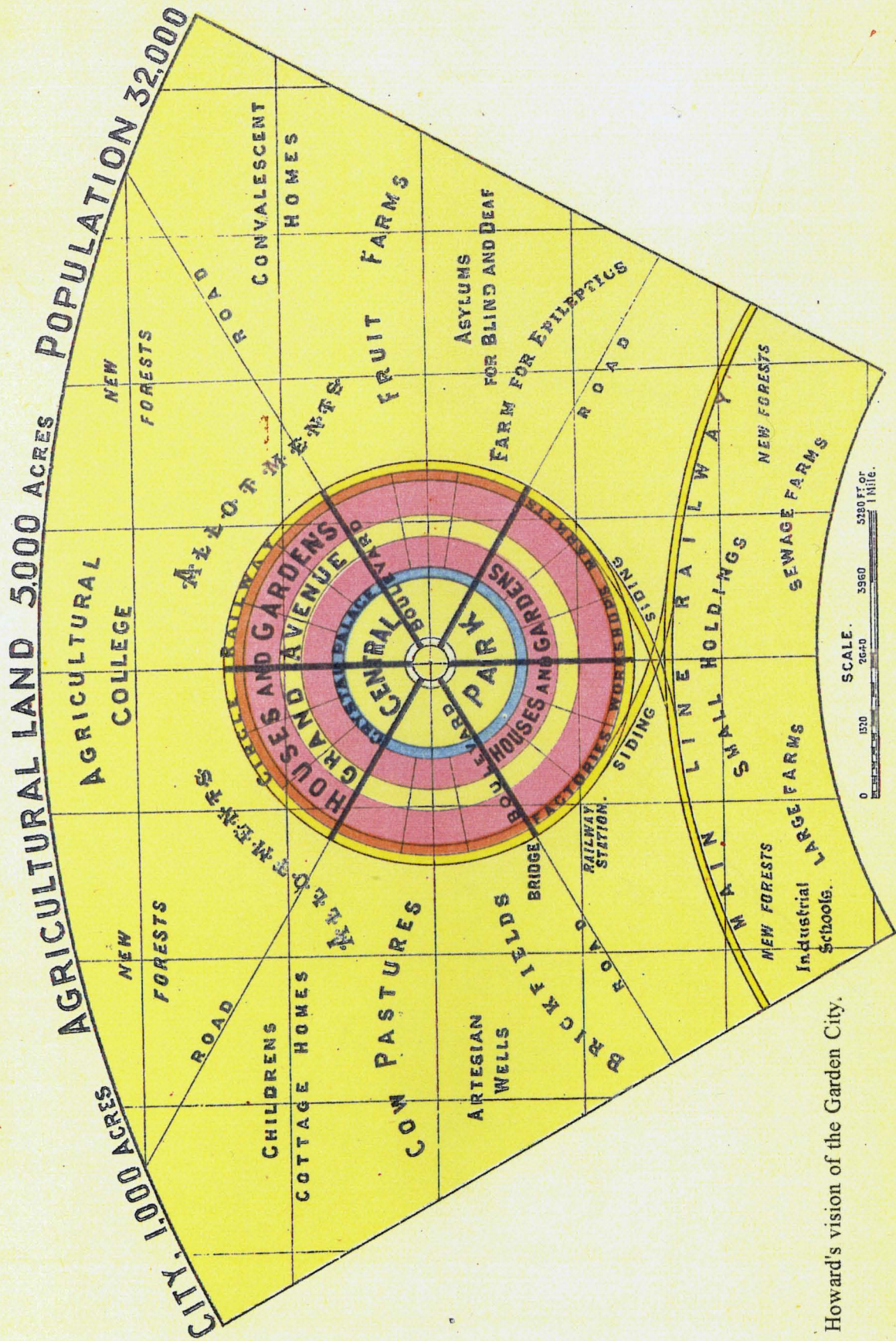


Figure 1: Howard's vision of the Garden City.

far less attention than the planning details of the garden city.¹⁸ As Peter Hall has argued, Howard is seen 'as a physical planner, ignoring the fact that his garden cities were merely the vehicle for a progressive reconstruction of capitalist society into an infinity of co-operative commonwealths.'¹⁹ It is Howard's ideas on land and its tenure that form the basis of his radical message.

Howard was an eclectic thinker and an avid imbibor of the works of the leading thinkers of the day.²⁰ Henry George was a particularly significant influence: Howard having read George's book *Progress and Poverty* soon after its publication in the United States in 1878.²¹ Like many other radicals and progressives in the Edwardian period, Howard was struck by George's theory of the nature of rent. The ideas of George have been examined ably elsewhere and it is sufficient here to say that Howard felt sympathy with George's view that landlord's rent was no more than an 'unearned increment' created solely by the efforts of others, by the general economic growth of the community.²² Howard saw the potential of securing for the community the increment: it

¹⁸ This reflects the predominance of a specialist slant to the histories of the garden city and town planning movement. Few studies bring the ideas of the movement within a wider social and intellectual history. The work of Peter Hall is an exception. See Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 87.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* To be fair, Howard himself must take some of the blame; his message lost something of its force and radicalism when *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* was re-published as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* in 1902. In Hall's words, the title 'was perhaps catchier, but it diverted people from the truly radical character of the message, demoting him from social visionary into physical planner.'

²⁰ Howard's ideas can be found amongst earlier writers, often several times over. Ledoux, Owen, Pemberton, Buckingham and Kropotkin all had towns of limited populations with surrounding agricultural green-belts. Howard took from Spencer the link between the scientific study of nature and of society. He also first encountered an appealing argument in favour of common ownership of land in Spencer's *Social Statistics*, (1851), though Spencer himself had subsequently rejected this argument. See Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia*, 19; W.A. Eden, 'Studies in Urban Theory, II: Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement', *Town Planning Review*, 19, (1947), 123-43. What Howard could, and did, claim was an unique combination of proposals. See Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 91.

²¹ Beevers, *Garden Cities and New Towns*, 23.

²² Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, 28-9. Howard, however, was not impressed by the bluntness of George's criticisms of landlords. George's wholesale blaming of landlord's for society's ills was, in his opinion, misguided in the sense that it failed to

would provide the financial basis for the ideal new city.²³ The measure also would be beneficial to society beyond material gain, unifying the community under a shared interest: 'the tenant has become a member of a community and gets his share of everything that raises the standard of life in the community'.²⁴ In the first edition of his book, Howard included a diagram of 'The Vanishing Point of Landlord's Rent' to illustrate these ideas, outlining how social benefit would flow back to the community as urban land values increased. As tenants' rate-rent progressively diminished the capital outlay for the city, the surplus would provide funds for the creation of a local welfare state, directly responsible to the local citizens (Figure 2).

Howard's aims were only partially realised in the practical manifestation of his idea, the first garden city at Letchworth. Several issues combined to limit their practical application. First, Howard's ideals, rendered only vaguely in his writings, suffered in their translation into practice. Nowhere, for example, did he define the relationship between the trustees of the First Garden City and the tenant-elected Board of Management in whom were to be vested the rights and powers of the community. At Letchworth and also at the second garden city at Welwyn, this omission effectively frustrated Howard's intention to introduce a form of democratic self-government. In part, this reflected a failure on Howard's part to recognise that the investing capitalists would inevitably demand a place on the Board of Management. Similarly, Howard's ideas on rent were affected by the needs of *Realpolitik*. The language used by Lord Grey at the opening of the Garden City estate at Letchworth was evocative and brimming with Howard's idealism: 'The fortunate community living on this estate will rejoice ...that the unearned increment...from the rents...will not go to enrich any individual landowner, but will be

recognise that many 'average citizen(s)' in fact aspired to be landlords themselves. Howard drew a firm distinction between the 'endeavour to change our land system' and the attacking of 'those individuals who represent it'. For a discussion of the ideas of George see Offer, *Property and Politics*.

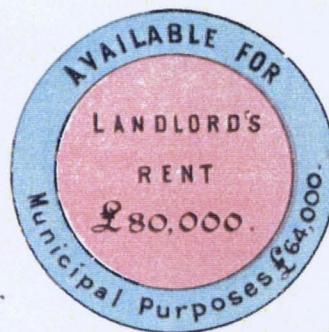
²³ Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, 29.

²⁴ D. MacFadyen, (ed.), *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement*, (Manchester, 1933), 64.

Nº 4.

The Vanishing Point of Landlords Rent.

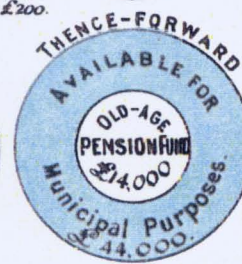
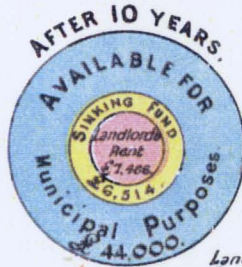
RENT & LOCAL RATES
of an average population
unequal to that of
GARDEN CITY
working under present
conditions are about



— **£144,000** —
— per annum
being **£4.10s** per
head of population, and
— with a constant
— tendency to rise.

By migrating to **GARDEN CITY**
rents and rates are at once reduced to
£2 per head,

out of which a
Sinking fund
is provided
for the gradual
extinction of
Landlords
Rent.
This end being



attained, all
the funds
hitherto devoted
to that purpose
may be applied
municipally,
or to the
provision of

Old Age Pensions.

Figure 2: Returning the socially-created increment to the community.

spent...to refine the lives...and exalt the minds of all who reside on the estate'.²⁵ However, the major objective of securing the increment in rent of enhanced land value was not realised in Howard's lifetime and only partially afterwards. Pragmatic considerations again diluted the ideal: leases of 999 years carrying only nominal ground rents had to be granted to industrialists in order to induce them to bring their enterprises to the town, and rents of housing plots could not be revised for a hundred years.²⁶ Forced to compromise in practice, Howard nevertheless continued to insist that the Garden City's tenure and dividend policy was central to the whole concept, reminding his readership that 'the Garden City took its rise in the hearts and minds of those who were strongly in favour of the public ownership of the land.'²⁷ The crucial matter here is the explicit rhetorical linkage of tenure, of communal ownership, with democracy. To Howard, communal tenure was a mechanism of empowering the ordinary people and of ensuring protection from the powerful.²⁸ In addition, the principle of common ownership of land was asserted as central to the development of a true community and a unified spirit. In Howard's words, 'Public ownership of land makes distinctly for this unity; it is indeed, the embodiment of it, and, without that spirit, it [the garden city] could not really continue to exist'.²⁹

The centrality of tenure for the practical expression of community remained a strong feature of town planning debates. Contemporaneous with Howard's development at Letchworth, the co-partnership housing movement advocated a similar conjunction of

²⁵ Quoted in M. Miller, *Raymond Unwin, Garden Cities and Town Planning*, (Leicester, 1992), 49.

²⁶ E.Howard, 'The Land Question at Letchworth, II', *The City*, 1, 8, (1909), 178. See also E.Howard, 'Our first Garden City', *St George's Magazine*, July 1904, 182.

²⁷ Howard, 'The Land Question at Letchworth, II', 177. Howard illustrated his point by relating the close connection the Garden City movement had with the Edwardian advocates of land nationalisation: 'The Garden City Association was born in the offices of Mr Alex Payne, Treasurer of the Land Nationalisation Society'; Yelling, 'Planning and the Land Question'; C.B.Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, (1949 edn.), 487; Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia*, 90-94; Beevers, *Garden Cities and New Towns*, 29; MacFadyen, *Sir Ebenezer Howard*, 70-71.

²⁸ Howard, 'The Land Question at Letchworth, II', 183-4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 178.

the individual and the communal through the mechanism of tenure.³⁰ Indeed, the garden city was regarded as a prime area for co-partnership which aimed to foster the practical endeavours of working men to secure a better standard of housing through co-operative action. In 1899, only a year after the publication of Howard's book, *Labour Co-partnership*, one of the organs of the co-operative movement, asserted the connection of the two movements.³¹ The potential of a such a combination for social democracy was the key theme of one editorial:

Are we to see ever larger and larger tracts of our beautiful country laid waste by the jerry builder, while the working people lose their heritage of air, light and garden ground...? Or is it possible that from the co-operative movement may come a practical protest against this state of things by the formation of such, let us say garden settlement, if city is too large a term? Over in America, at Leclair, the thing has been done...but it has been done for the community through the enterprise and public spirit of one man...The initiative has not come from the handworkers, but from his own impulse. But must men always have a beneficent despot to show them the way they should go? Let us in England show that a democratic movement can go forward as fast and as far!... All that is needed to make this dream a reality is the realisation by co-operators of how much lies in their power if they so will.³²

The chief medium advocated was a new form of public utility scheme. The co-partnership idea, which had been developing in industrial and retail circles, was thus

³⁰ A broadly comparable co-partnership movement also developed in the context of industry, which many heralded as providing a vital bridge between the interests of capital and labour.

³¹ *Labour Co-partnership*, 5, 8, (1899), 210. *Labour Co-partnership* frequently ran editorials devoted to the garden city idea, the land and the 'unearned increment' issue, and the idea of co-partnership housing. The interest in co-partnership housing reached a peak in the years 1907-1910. By the outbreak of war in 1914 the Garden City and Town Planning Association and the co-partnership movement shared several key personnel, including Stanley Jevons (founder of the Cardiff tenant co-partnership), J.S. Nettlefold (founder of Harborne Tenants Ltd) and Aneurin Williams (President of the Labour Association). J. Birchall, 'Co-partnership housing and the garden city movement', *Planning Perspectives*, 10, (1995), 329-58; K.J. Skilleter, 'The Role of Public Utility Societies in Early British Town Planning and Housing Reform, 1901-1936', *Planning Perspectives*, 8, (1993), 127.

³² *Labour Co-partnership*, 5, 8, (1899), 210. See also *Labour Co-partnership*, 8, 9, (1902), 133-4. Howard himself appealed directly to the co-operative movement through the paper, *Labour Co-partnership*, 7, 11, (1901), 170-71.

adapted to the field of housing and estate development.³³ The movement was hailed as a new and vital form of self-help.³⁴ By the end of the nineteenth century, many of the older organs of self-help had lost the initiative in building and estate development. The progressive and participatory principles of the early building societies had largely dissipated under the domination of the permanent society, which placed emphasis solely on the financial security of individual properties.³⁵ In accord with the garden city movement, co-partnership in housing emphasised the importance of the individual within the wider community.³⁶ Two main benefits were stressed in co-partnership publicity. The first echoed the sociological aims of many garden city protagonists, namely the gathering together 'in natural sympathy various classes so that each could take part in the common duty of good neighbourship.'³⁷ It also brought clear practical benefits. For example, where a site was being developed on co-partnership lines, the whole community could be thought of and planned for: not just houses for individuals, but a home for a community.³⁸ With economic return less of an urgent priority, room and resources could be devoted to centres for association; clubs, schools, community institutes, etc. were common additions to such estates. Henry Vivian summed up these benefits:

The principle of sharing, therefore not only causes each individual house

³³ Ultimately, however, the response from the existing co-operative movement was muted, leaving the garden cities to ally with co-partnership schemes which had to rely on investment by 'plutocrats', Birchall, 'Co-partnership housing and the garden city movement', 341.

³⁴ The constitutions of the societies were based on the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts. See Skilleter, 'The Role of Public Utility Societies', 129.

³⁵ S.M. Gaskell, "'The Suburb Salubrious': Town Planning in Practice', in A. Sutcliffe, (ed.), *British Town Planning: The Formative Years*, (Leicester, 1981), 30. For later expressions of disillusionment with self-help voluntary action see below, chapter 6.

³⁶ See for example, S. Gurney and A. Richardson M.P. in Co-partnership Tenants Housing Council, *Garden Suburbs, Villages and Homes: all about co-partnership houses*, (1906), 3 and 16-7 respectively.

³⁷ Rt. Hon. A. Lyttelton, in *Cottages with Gardens for Londoners*, (1907), 14-5. See below, pages 72-4, for the discussion of the advocacy of a mixed community at Hampstead Garden Suburb.

³⁸ This element echoes the increasing interest in providing communal or neighbourhood facilities. See below, pages 63-71.

to become more attractive, but gives to the whole area covered that coherence which, springing from the common life of the community, expresses itself in the harmony and beauty of the whole. This harmony of outward expression must in turn react on the life that flourishes under its influence, at once stimulating the growth of co-operation and giving wider opportunities for its practice.³⁹

The co-partnership philosophy carried an optimistic, ameliorative message: Vivian's model was for the voluntary co-operation of labour and capitalists for the common benefit of society and, by offering a means to reconcile the interests of landlord and tenant, social and political tensions, it was hoped, would significantly weaken.⁴⁰ The notion of 'equality' was not prominent in the co-partnership rhetoric; indeed, it was hardly ever mentioned. Instead, the major theme was fraternity, represented through a language of 'community, brotherhood or fellowship'.⁴¹ Tenants' involvement in the running of the estates varied and, in the case of the flagship Ealing and Hampstead Tenants societies, was very quickly diminished. The Ealing society, whose initial management committee consisted of eleven members, seven of whom were tenants, 'had inherited the Tenant Co-partners' rule of one person one vote'. However, this policy was changed between 1907 and 1908: changes to the constitution now allowed voting by proxy and, crucially, awarded 'an additional vote for every set of ten shares held'.⁴² Interestingly, both at Ealing and at Hampstead Garden Suburb, associations of tenants were formed in the aftermath of this change 'to advocate the return to those principles of true co-partnership in housing, the wilful or careless neglect of which has been the fruitful cause of much discontent among the Hampstead Tenant Shareholders, and others'.⁴³ Other societies maintained a degree of tenant involvement at the level of the management committee beyond the First World War, but it is clear that pressure from commercial interests placed strain on the relationship between non-tenant members and

³⁹ Vivian, 'Garden Cities', 512-13.

⁴⁰ Birchall, 'Co-partnership housing and the garden city movement', 346.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 344.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 349.

⁴³ Quoted in Skilleter, 'The Role of Public Utility Societies', 145.

tenants at various points during their post-First World War history.⁴⁴

In contrast to Vivian, other advocates of co-partnership housing saw the future in a more interventionist light with the state, through the municipalities, playing a fundamental role. By 1907, *Co-partnership* stated that while it welcomed the voluntary involvement of co-partnership schemes in garden suburb developments, it hoped this was

but a forerunner of what will be done when public bodies and municipalities have an active land policy and co-operate with us... Our development in connection with voluntary Garden Suburbs is, we hope, only a step towards development in connection with municipalities and the municipal Garden Suburbs of the future.⁴⁵

Yet the ideal relationship sought between the municipality and the co-partnership societies varied considerably between housing reformers. The Birmingham councillor and housing reformer J.S.Nettlefold saw a positive role for local authorities, advocating their involvement as ground landlords to facilitate authority-wide town planning and to recoup the 'unearned increment' on property for the community as a whole.⁴⁶ But Nettlefold also believed that direct local authority building and management of estates should be avoided, regarding this level of local authority engagement as financially enervating and of benefit only to the small number of residents who would receive access to this accommodation.⁴⁷ Beyond this, he regarded it as having dubious moral value:

municipal house building always has been, and from the very nature of the circumstances surrounding it, always must be more or less eleemosynary in its results and very often these doles reach quite the wrong people, such as owners of houses unfit for human habitation. One of the principles of modern social reform is to give the people their rights, not charity, and this great principle ought to be applied to housing.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Birchall, 'Co-partnership housing and the garden city movement', 350-2.

⁴⁵ *Co-Partnership*, [formerly *Labour Co-partnership*], 13, 1, (1907), 12.

⁴⁶ Nettlefold, *A Housing Policy*, 70-6. Nettlefold looked to the example of German municipal land ownership, as described by the Manchester town planner and chairman of the city's Citizens' Association, T.C.Horsfall. See Horsfall, *The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People. The Example of Germany*, (Manchester, 1904).

⁴⁷ Nettlefold, *A Housing Policy*, 29-38.

⁴⁸ Nettlefold, *Practical Town Planning*, 141.

Instead, Nettlefold argued, co-partnership schemes should be the principal developer, thereby avoiding a heavy drain on the rates and encouraging a 'wise and well-balanced mixture of self-interest and communal interest....The great advantage of co-partnership housing over municipal housebuilding is that in the former case people are helped to help themselves, whereas in the latter everything is done for them, than which there is nothing worse for human nature'.⁴⁹

The Housing, Town Planning Act of 1909 provided a legislative framework for the development of municipal Garden Suburbs: local authorities were to have the power to control the standards of layout and impose conditions of development on new estates, if they so chose. The co-operative garden suburb had caught the public and the official imagination: as a model for development it lay at the fore of the housing and town planning debate in 1909. Yet, as Gaskell has suggested, the 1909 Act 'was a compromise of attitudes, a pragmatic proposal reflecting a commitment only to what had been demonstrated to be achievable'.⁵⁰ The Act, in fact, left many fundamental questions unanswered. The town planning sections of the act were purely permissive and contained no powers to enable municipalities to buy land on their urban fringes, contrary to what reform advocates such as Nettlefold and Horsfall had urged.⁵¹ It failed, therefore, to address the difficulties of land reform and to introduce a system for the compulsory acquisition of land.⁵² As a result planning was limited in practice to suburban extension, and not the novel development envisaged by Howard.⁵³ This timidity towards sweeping

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 200. Interestingly, James Ramsay MacDonald was also unhappy with local authority housing management though his concerns were based on a different logic, fearing that subsidized rents would reduce wages. He argued, instead, for a high minimum wage policy, thus leaving working people to arrange their own housing.

⁵⁰ Gaskell, "The Suburb Salubrious", 41.

⁵¹ G.E. Cherry, *Cities and Plans. The Shaping of Urban Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (1988), 71.

⁵² This was compounded by the concurrent failure to re-vivify the local government system of finance. See M. Daunt, *House and Home in the Victorian City: Working Class Housing, 1850-1914*, (1983), 201-33; Offer, *Property and Politics*, Part V.

⁵³ The longer term planning complications of this matter will be examined in more detail in Part I, chapter 5. The failure to address land reform in any detail also had the effect of increasing attention on inner city regeneration. See below, pages 170-3.

political action was recognised by contemporaries as unavoidable, indeed part of the English scheme of things. Aneurin Williams, a leading participant in the co-partnership movement, noted:

whether we believe in taxation of site values, or even go so far as land nationalisation, we must recognise that changes of that sort can only come very slowly. The English people have had the power to make radical reforms for a generation, but they do not care to do so. Some of us may live to see some measure of land reform passed, but it is not at all likely to be anything very thorough in our time.⁵⁴

While such elemental questions remained unanswered, Howard, Vivian, Williams, and many others, argued that co-partnership housing and site planning could act as a uncontroversial substitute. Before this could be proved or disproved, the First World War intervened, casting a different light on the housing question. Though still functioning in the interwar years, public utility societies adopted an increasingly specialised, indeed, marginal role. For example, T.H.Mawson, the author of *An Imperial Obligation. Industrial Villages for Partially Disabled Soldiers and Sailors* published in 1917, planned a War Memorial Village for the war-injured which was to be built on co-partnership lines.⁵⁵ Religious communities provided another niche for co-partnership building.⁵⁶ By this time, however, quantity and speed of construction had become the prime issues of housing policy. Development over the next few decades became dominated by municipalities or private enterprise and the co-partnership movement lost the initiative.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ A. Williams, 'Co-operative societies and co-operative towns', *Labour Co-partnership*, 9, 1, (1902), 5.

⁵⁵ Not all these specialised projects were successful. The War Memorial Village was 'a particularly poignant failure', Skilleter, 'The Role of Public Utility Societies', 154.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Even before the First World War had ended the limited numbers of public utility society provision, in comparison to local authority provision was noted. By 1916, for example, E.G. Culpin of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association estimated that public utility societies had provided 7767 houses compared to the 20,000 built by Local authorities before 1914, *ibid.*, 134, 136. Private enterprise also received a boost during the early years of the interwar period, the 1923 Housing Act, for example, was designed to encourage private enterprise to build small housing, with local authority activity permissible only if the Minister was convinced that it would not interfere with the work of private contractors.

However, the promise of citizen empowerment and its link with the mechanics of tenure, did not lapse with the co-partnership housing movement.⁵⁸ Many planners and politicians transferred their hopes to local government itself as the locus of communality. Labour and Fabian socialist reformers, whose numbers were beginning to swell the borough councils of London and some other large urban centres, particularly supported the elected local authority as the prime medium for a democratic housing policy.⁵⁹ Moreover Labour politicians continued to explore the potential of land reform as a tool for fiscal as well as physical redistribution.⁶⁰ Echoing the rhetoric of Henry George, the Labour party in the early 1920s expressed concern for the stultifying effect of high land prices in urban areas, damaging to both housing and employment projects.⁶¹ Practical politics aside, the land question held important ideological questions for Labour activists, as the *Labour Speakers' Handbook* echoed:

Apart from these economic considerations, there is the just claim, that as the land value is unquestionably the creation of the community as a whole, therefore the community has a moral right to appropriate through the machinery of taxation a part, or, if need be, the whole of the land value of the country.

The institution of such a policy would 'rightly collect for the community the economic

⁵⁸ The politics of tenure was not, of course the only avenue to citizen empowerment that was explored at this time. Across the political spectrum, other expressions of citizen unity attracted attention. In particular, and as will be discussed below, the interwar drive for Tenant's and Community Associations stressed the importance of citizen participation in the social life of the community. See the work of the New Estates Community Committee of the National Council of Social Service, for example, as outlined in the NCSS journal *Community*. Also see below, pages 68-70.

⁵⁹ See, for example, S. Pepper, 'Ossulston Street. Early LCC Experiments in High-Rise Housing 1925-29', *London Journal*, 7, 1, (1981), 46-64; Ravetz, *Model Estate*. The garden city architect Raymond Unwin, himself a Fabian socialist, similarly diverted his energies into the development of council housing during and after the First World War.

⁶⁰ In May 1923 MacDonald appointed a Land Policy Advisory Committee under the auspices of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Joint Research and Information Department. See Labour Party Archive (LPA): Land Policy, Minutes, 5, June 1923. For discussion of the land question in the context of reform of local government finance, see below, pages 134-9.

⁶¹ LPA: Land Policy (2), Hugh Dalton, Memoranda, 3; Land Policy (2), Memoranda, Draft Report.

rent of which the community is itself the creator.’⁶² The Land Committee could ‘see no justification for the steady appropriation by landlords of values, the existence of which is entirely independent of their own efforts’.⁶³ The taxation of land values was also seen as the crucial first step to the party’s ultimate objective, the public ownership of land. For all its worth as a means of creating a more equitable tax and rate system, the party felt that the taxation of land values could not fully serve the interests of the community.⁶⁴ While it would stimulate the more productive use of land this would be on the landowner’s criteria, which was not necessarily the most beneficial use to society. For example, it might lead to intensive building on land better left undeveloped.⁶⁵ In a memorandum to the Committee, members W. Leach and Arthur Greenwood argued that only national ownership of land would bring the maximum social advantage, stating that

the assumption that the taxation of site values will liberate the user of the land and lead to the fullest use of the land is rooted in individualism. The taxation of site values is designed by those who put all their eggs into this basket to secure the establishment of a system of unfettered *laissez faire* and rests on the belief that the pursuit of individual profit secures social well-being.

This, they suggested was a ‘fallacy’.⁶⁶ The Land Committee concurred, accepting that this was indeed an assumption ‘not at all consistent with the fundamental postulates of the Labour Party’.⁶⁷ Unlike the taxation of land values, the public ownership of land would

⁶² *Labour Speakers’ Handbook*, 17, cited by Madsen in his evidence to the Land Committee. LPA: Land Policy (2), Memoranda, 11 June 1923.

⁶³ LPA: Land Policy (2), Memoranda, 11 June 1923.

⁶⁴ Dalton had stressed the fiscal aspect of the policy to his Land Committee colleagues arguing that ‘from the point of view of the distribution of wealth...such a tax is greatly preferable to taxes on food, entertainments and the smaller incomes now subject to income tax.’ Although a flat rate tax, if supplemented by a graduated super-tax and death duties, the taxation of land values would serve the party’s redistributive aims. LPA: Land Policy (2). Dalton, Memoranda, 3.

⁶⁵ LPA: Land Policy (2), Memoranda, Draft Report, 23.

⁶⁶ LPA: Land Policy, (2), Nationalisation of the land, July 1923.

⁶⁷ LPA: Land Policy (2), Draft Report, 23.

'invest *the community* with the power to utilise the land as *it* thinks best.'⁶⁸ The Land Committee was not called upon to submit its report to the party's executive; indeed, the general election of 1923 was held before even the Committee itself could examine the recommendations, although it was circulated to individual members and extracts found their way into the *Notes for Speakers* in time for the election campaign. The matter lost impetus during the remainder of the interwar period, although it did not disappear completely. The Land Committee was reconstituted in 1925 and party conferences and policy documents continued to reiterate the commitment to public ownership of land following a period of taxation of land values on the grounds that only substantive land reform would penetrate the very roots of social organisation.⁶⁹ Philip Snowden, indeed, duly introduced the taxation of land values in his 1931 Budget.⁷⁰ Moreover, in the Labour party the issue was subsumed within a wider debate on how to recoup and distribute all forms of socially-created value, for example by nationalisation and through a capital levy.⁷¹

⁶⁸ LPA: Land Policy (2), Nationalisation of the Land, July 1923, 1. The taxation of land values, however, was seen by many in the party as an important precursor to public ownership by reducing the market cost of land. The party was largely united in its belief in the necessity to compensate the owners of nationalised land, and thus without the precursor of taxation of land values, the community would be paying grossly inflated prices for land. Also, the funds from the taxation of land values, or a proportion of them, could be diverted into a land fund for this compensation. See LPA: Land Policy (2), Draft Report, 32; Dalton memorandum, 6.

⁶⁹ LPA: Land Policy (2), Minutes and Memoranda, 1925; *Labour and the Nation*, (1928), 39; *The Labour Party: Report of the Twentieth-Eighth Conference*, (1928), 230; J.C. Wedgwood, *The Land Question. Taxation and the Rating of Land Values*, (1929), 9.

⁷⁰ P. Snowden, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 251, 27 April 1931, 1411; *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 252, 4 May 1931, 50. The issue proved especially enduring at the local level, with the London Labour Party, in particular, keeping the policy afloat. In 1936 and again in 1938 the issue reached the House of Commons in two London Rating Bills and gained the support of the PLP. The Labour leadership, however, did not give consistent and active support for the measure. See GLRO: Acc/2417/A/6-7, 13, 18; *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 345, 8 and 15 February 1939; LPA: Home Policy Committee, Minutes, 27 June 1938, 18 October 1938, 13 December 1938 and 'Report of Discussion on Land Values Taxation, Appendix to Minutes, 21 February 1939.

⁷¹ For the capital levy see Cronin, *The Politics of State Expansion*, 61-4, 82-6; Dalton Papers, 8/1, Political and General Correspondence 1940-45, letter from Dalton to Herbert Morrison, 24 January 1943, and Morrison to Dalton, 29 January 1943. See also Daunton,

While the substance of Ebenezer Howard's plan for 'social cities' may not have been fully adopted by politicians and planning reformers during the interwar years, much of the rhetoric and idealism was, forming part of the context for interwar and postwar town planning debates. A distortion, perhaps a weakening, of the communal ownership advocated by Howard and others, the rhetoric of shared tenure and common purpose nevertheless percolated to the period of postwar reconstruction. Indeed, the debate occasioned by the framing of New Towns policy in 1946 returned such issues to prominence. Lewis Mumford, who wrote the introduction to the 1946 edition of *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, concurred with Howard that 'the key' to the New Towns as to the Garden City, 'was that the citizens would own the land in perpetuity'.⁷² Frederic Osborn, president of the Town and Country Planning Association (a reformulation of Howard's Garden Cities Association) and a member of the Reith Committee on the New Towns, championed the role of co-operative societies and local authorities in making communal tenure a reality. The Report of the Reith Committee and the New Towns Bill, however, proposed the establishment of state development corporations to own and develop the chosen sites.⁷³ The instruments of common ownership had changed, but the rhetoric remained remarkably constant.

In searching for an answer to society's problems Ebenezer Howard had drawn

'How to pay for the war', *English Historical Review*, (forthcoming, Sept., 1996); R. Whiting, 'The Boundaries of Taxation', in Green and Whiting (eds.), *The Boundaries of the State*, 146-69. In Labour circles, the land question also found an outlet in debates over access to the land, for example, for hikers and ramblers; an issue of particular interest to Hugh Dalton.

⁷² Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 93. See also C.B. Purdom, *How should we rebuild London?*, (1946, 2nd edn.), 199.

⁷³ J.B. Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning. Vol. III: New Towns Policy, 1939-1969*, (1979), 14-5; F.J. Osborn and A. Whittick, *New Towns. Their Origins, Achievements and Progress*, (1969), 101-2. The majority of the Reith Committee recommended that the centrally-sponsored development agency should remain the land-owner. This recommendation about future ownership was rejected by Silkin in favour of transfer of ownership to the local authority.

inspiration from the writings of Ruskin, Morris and Kropotkin,⁷⁴ and Ruskinians and other communitarians had rallied to support the moves he made in this direction, connected by a shared sense that the nineteenth century had been an aberration in social organisation that needed to be put right.⁷⁵ This connection, moreover, was not limited to Howard, many of the leading town planners in this early period found Morrisian and Ruskinian motifs and quotations apposite for their message of renewal through co-operation.⁷⁶ Raymond Unwin, architect and town planner who, along with his cousin Barry Parker, designed Howard's Letchworth Garden City, is a particularly interesting example.⁷⁷ Unwin's political ideas are inseparable from his architectural and planning work. Early on he declared himself a socialist and worked actively to further the nascent movement, joining Morris's Socialist League and, subsequently, the Independent Labour

⁷⁴ Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns*, 25. Ruskin was one of a group of visionaries who, Howard believed, failed only 'as by a hair's breadth' themselves in formulating the garden city idea. (Others he placed in this group included Moses, Thomas More, William Morris and Peter Kropotkin). E.Howard, 'Spiritual Influences Towards Social Progress', *Light*, 23 April 1910, 197 quoted in Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia*, 17.

⁷⁵ For example, J.H.Whitehouse then editing *St George*, published one of Howard's articles on Letchworth. Above all, Letchworth attracted the 'community' enthusiasts of the time, as the symbol of a positive future. See W.Armytage, *Heavens Below. Utopian Experiments in England, 1560-1960*, (1961), 373; Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, 130-3. Yet this was not a backward-looking movement; Kropotkin, in particular, acknowledged that new technologies had opened up enormous possibilities for realising his vision. Howard too shared in this embrace of the new, clean technology; electric power, the telegraph and the motor car, made possible the decentralisation that was desired. See, for example, Howard's advocacy of a 'rapid railway transit' linking his social cities into a cohesive, if physically separate, unit, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, 130-3; E.L.Young, 'Decentralisation', *The City*, 1, 3, (1909), 52-53; Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 144-5.

⁷⁶ See for example, speech of John Burns, Labour President of the Local Government Board, to Royal Institute of British Architects, *Report of the Town Planning Conference*, 1910 quoted in Armytage, *Heavens Below*, 382.

⁷⁷ Raymond Unwin's work is central to the early town planning movement in Britain imparting an influence on postwar planners engaged in the New Towns development.

Party.⁷⁸ The influence of Morris and of Ruskin is clear and was frequently acknowledged by Unwin himself. In his inaugural presidential address to the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1931, for example, he stated:

my early days were influenced by the musical voice of John Ruskin, vainly striving to stem the flood of a materialism which seemed to be overwhelming the arts, and much else; and later by the more robust and constructive personality of William Morris, and his crusade for the restoration of beauty to daily life. Those were times when it was very interesting to be alive.⁷⁹

Never pure Ruskin, never pure Morris, Unwin nevertheless employed a rhetorical frame of reference which set his ideas and practice very much within a radical and progressive context.⁸⁰

The interaction between the built environment and the emerging community is a central aspect to Unwin's thought, a component which, indeed, found much support throughout the town planning movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet, just as the ideals of co-partnership are seen to have faded out of the planning arena as private and public authority building increased, so Morrisian ideals of community co-operation are assumed to have dissipated once vernacular design gave way to the modern movement in architecture. This division has been overdrawn: both are expressions of faith in environmental determinism and an holistic conception of human and social needs. For

⁷⁸ Unwin, while welcoming the advance of democracy was, nevertheless, wary of some of its implications. In particular, he was concerned to see that the development of democracy was not accompanied by a rise in class antagonism. His interest in the bonds of 'community' can be seen in this light. See S. Meacham, 'Raymond Unwin 1863-1940. Designing for Democracy in Edwardian England', in Pedersen and Mandler (eds), *After the Victorians*, 79.

⁷⁹ R. Unwin, 'The Architect's Contribution', *RIBA Journal*, 7 November 1931, 9, quoted in Meacham, 'Raymond Unwin', 81.

⁸⁰ Mark Swenarton has recently shown the peculiarities of Unwin's Ruskinianism. For example, although Unwin did acknowledge the Ruskinian tenet of architecture as the expression of joy in labour, in practice he was more concerned with 'the role of architecture in giving satisfaction, not to its producers, but to its users.', *Artisans and Architects. The Ruskinian Tradition in Architectural Thought*, (Basingstoke, 1989), 127. J.A.Hobson was similarly stressing joy through consumption and not production. If more wealth could be distributed to the poor through a living wage, he argued, they would be able to buy differentiated goods and, therefore, stop needless, exploitative mass-production. See Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians', 210-11.

example, many of the communitarian ideals exhibited in Unwin's work are present in the architectural thought and practice of exponents of the modern movement. Both Unwin's garden city designs and the modernists' advocacy of working-class flats, asserted the value of the 'consciously-designed estate that was not only an architectural unity but also, in theory, offered everything necessary for a full life for all age-groups and social groupings'.⁸¹ A number of the most pertinent examples of this continuity or comparability will be explored in this section of the chapter.

Planners and social commentators interested in the process of community formation argued that a community, which by the later 1930s and 1940s had begun to be described in terms of a neighbourhood, needed to have some sort of visual coherence which in turn would both reflect and foster social coherence.⁸² The Garden City movement offered clear examples of this social philosophy: Unwin's work at Letchworth and at Hampstead Garden Suburb is particularly germane. Reflecting his belief in the reciprocal relationship between architecture and society, Unwin argued that unity, and hence by implication, a sense of community, could best be achieved by means of 'aesthetic control', for example, in the choice of building materials and in design:

Architecture has always reflected the condition of the society in which it flourished....Recently it has very clearly represented the inordinate desire for individual independence. One sees terraces of houses, each painted a different colour to try and emphasize their independence....Society is, however, now realising very fast that this independence is no end in itself, and is only good in that it sets free the individuals to form new relationships based on mutual association.⁸³

He hoped that this development would, in turn, be reflected in architecture and that 'it may again become not only possible but natural that our towns should express in the beauty of their outward form the greater intensity of their civic life'.⁸⁴ (Figure 3).

In forging a practical realisation of this sentiment Unwin drew inspiration from

⁸¹ Ravetz, *Model Estate*, 47.

⁸² See, for example, P. Collison, 'Town Planning and the Neighbourhood Unit Concept', *Public Administration*, 32, (1954), 463-9.

⁸³ R. Unwin, and B. Parker, *The Art of Building a Home*, (1901), 107-8.

⁸⁴ R. Unwin, 'Co-operative Architecture', *The City*, 1, 10, (1909), 255.

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**Figure 3 Publicizing the 'sanctuary' of Unwin's Garden Suburb at Hampstead
London Underground poster of c 1908**

historical pre-capitalist communities in which he saw a fruitful combination of individual and social elements.⁸⁵ Drawing on the medieval enthusiasm of William Morris, Unwin suggested that the buildings and residential patterns of the middle ages expressed an orderly social life. The village was a potent emblem. In addition to the communitarian experiments of the 1880s a number of progressive manufacturers had incorporated the village character in their own model communities, notably at Port Sunlight and Bournville. Unwin responded positively to these attempts to recover village community:

The village was the expression of a small corporate life in which all the different units were personally in touch with each other.... It is this crystallisation of the elements in a village in accordance with a definitely organised life of mutual relations...which gives the appearance of being an organic whole, the home of the community, to what would otherwise be a mere conglomeration of buildings....Association for mutual help in various ways is undoubtedly the growing influence which is destined to bring to communities that crystalline structure which was so marked a feature of feudal society, and the lack of which is so characteristic of our own.⁸⁶

The pliability of the notion of community, however, made it an acceptable goal for communitarian socialists and paternalistic Tories alike. In articulating the concept in terms of the medieval village Unwin himself revealed its ambiguity. The organic unity of his vision of past village communities was defined in terms of its 'orderly arrangement...in which all the different units were personally in touch with each other, conscious of and frankly accepting their relations, and on the whole content with them': an interpretation that was undeniably difficult to reconcile with his commitment to

⁸⁵ Colony movements, many of which echoed perceptions of medieval social organisation, had a period of growth and success in the 1880s and 1890s; an experience shared by Unwin himself who lived at Edward Carpenter's community on the outskirts of Sheffield before beginning his career as an architect. Unwin also wrote about pre-capitalist societies in the Socialist League's journal *Commonweal* eg, R. Unwin, 'Early Communal Life and What it Teaches', *Commonweal*, 16 April 122-3; 23 April, 134-5; 30 April, 138-9; 7 May, 146-7; 14 May, 157, (1887); R. Unwin, 'Socialist Tactics - A Third Course', *Today*, 8, 49, 1887, 180-6; R. Unwin, 'Co-operation in Building', *Architects' Magazine*, 1, 2, December 1900, 20 and 1, 3, January 1901, 37-8 (reprinted in Unwin and Parker, *The Art of Building a Home*.) For general discussion of the resurgence of interest in the notion of community see R.A.Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, (1967), chapter 3.

⁸⁶ Unwin and Parker, *The Art of Building a Home*, 92-3, 95, 100.

democratic socialism.⁸⁷ Yet, Unwin was not an apologist for a return to a feudalistic past. Indeed, it is the combination of the traditional and the modern which is striking in his work. For example, Unwin presented his work in the context of the emerging democracy, the mark of modern times. This was reflected in his insistence of a high standard of accommodation for his working-class cottages which usually included three bedrooms and a bath. Yet he clearly found inspiration in the explicitly hierarchical social structures of an earlier epoch, believing that the solution to modern living could be achieved by somehow combining egalitarian socialism with what he saw as the organicism of traditional hierarchical communities.⁸⁸ In holding this view Unwin was certainly not alone. Interest in the social bonds of medieval society, and in the lessons which could be drawn from this heritage, was shared by a number of key writers in the Edwardian and interwar period. The historian F.W.Maitland, for example, shaped his pluralist political leanings through an interest in medieval corporate life. Similarly, Ernest Barker, theorist and writer on English political thought and an active advocate of community regeneration for the voluntary organisation the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), found inspiration from medieval history.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 92. However, the contemporary academic interest in the active role of community in the pre-enclosure village may have eased some of these concerns about using a model from the feudal period. Interestingly, the old-England imagery was remarkably durable among British socialists. A particularly strong evocation of it came from Aneurin Bevan in 1948, 'We have to try to recapture the glory of some of the past English villages, where the small cottages of the labourers were cheek by jowl with the butcher's shop, and where the doctor could reside benignly with his patients in the same street', *Architects' Journal*, 24 June 1948.

⁸⁸ Meacham, 'Raymond Unwin', 79-102.

⁸⁹ Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics*, 71-7. Maitland was particularly interested in medieval guilds seeing them as a notable feature of the English nation's capacity for voluntary association 'which had flourished despite all the odds of Roman law that had been stacked against it', 72. Other writers at this time commented on the strength of English associationism over the ages and throughout society. See, for example, the historical writings of William Stubbs and George Unwin and the political writing of J.N.Figgis, for example, *Churches in the Modern State*, (1913), 47-8. See also the contemporary interest in pre-industrial patterns of land ownership and social organisation, for example, R.H.Tawney's work on the destruction of communities through the enclosure movement, and the complementary historical studies of the Hammonds, and the academic interest in the Saxon folkmoets destroyed under the Norman yoke. Of course, as the examples given here demonstrate, this historical interest in medieval

Central to this interpretation of the social role of architecture and town planning was a clear conception of how 'community' might be translated into tangible form. In particular, a strong argument was evinced for the importance of communal buildings to the development of an active sense of belonging. Communal buildings, it was argued, would act as a focal point for the expression of neighbourliness. Again the work of Raymond Unwin offers clear examples of the deployment of this belief in practice. The planning of New Earswick, near York, for Joseph Rowntree provided him with the opportunity to explore the practical possibilities for community-orientated design. Communal laundries and kitchens, common rooms and gardens were instituted with this aim in mind.⁹⁰ At Hampstead Garden Suburb, communal space was provided at Willifield Green and the adjacent Suburb Club House. Located between the 'artisans quarter' and the middle class housing, the Green and the Club House were regarded as a social and visual focal centre intended to promote mixing between the social classes of the Suburb.⁹¹

The medieval references drawn by Unwin in developing this understanding of architecture and planning should not deter comparisons being drawn with later, indeed explicitly modern, formulations of a similar agenda. By the mid-1930s English modernist architects had solidified into a coherent grouping, as represented by the formation of the MARS (Modern Architectural Research) Group in 1933 as the British delegation of CIAM (Congr s Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) and by the ATO (Architects' and Technicians' Organisation).⁹² This *avant garde* incorporated the theoretical rationale and iconography, and a number of the personnel, of continental modernism. Yet, if English innovative architecture, as represented by the Arts and Crafts movement and the

patterns of social organisation could be held in conjunction with a wide range of political beliefs.

⁹⁰ Unwin and Parker, *The Art of Building a Home*, 104-6. See also Miller, *Raymond Unwin, Garden Cities and Town Planning*, 40.

⁹¹ M. Miller and A. Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb*, (Chichester, 1992), 121.

⁹² The ATO was more explicitly political than MARS. Its membership consisted of architects, many of whom were salaried staff at local authorities, quantity surveyors, clerks of works and construction workers. A number of economists and statisticians were also involved, as was Harold Laski and some of the Cambridge scientists such as Bernal and Haldane. Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 322-3.

Garden Cities, had become somnolent in the years around the Great War, its influence nevertheless remained and was taken up in many respects in the 1930s when architecture reasserted an explicitly social conscience and agenda.⁹³ The housing programme of Finsbury Borough Council in the late 1930s, for example, demonstrates the continuity of communitarian approaches to urban living. As part of a broad plan to regenerate the housing and social amenities of the borough, the Labour-led council engaged the services of the modernist architect Berthold Lubetkin, a Russian emigre, and his firm Tecton.⁹⁴ The basis of Finsbury's planning discussions was Tecton's award winning entry in an architectural competition for 'Working Class' flats, described by Lubetkin as an attempt to establish a model for 'the way ahead' in both housing design and society.⁹⁵ Tecton's housing designs for the Priory Green and Spa Green estates went beyond the LCC standard, particularly with regard to public spaces. Communal areas were generous, supporting the notion that housing of this nature and at this scale was not a matter of multiple dwellings, 'but an idea of community within which one has an individual dwelling',⁹⁶ a view notably close to that of Raymond Unwin. Similar motivations seem to have been at work in the building of the Quarry Hill Flats by Leeds City Council

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 100, 136-7; N. Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius*, (1936) draws attention to the connections between Morris and the modern movement in Germany. Moreover, Swenarton has argued, in revision of Pevsner, that the Ruskinian influence on architectural thought also 'continued to play a major part in twentieth-century thought' with modernism drawing 'to a considerable extent on the Ruskinian tradition, developing partly in reaction to, but also partly in continuation of, the main postulates of the Ruskinian position', in particular the stress on the artistic and spiritual value of architecture. The main examples of this continuation, he argues, can be seen in the work of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright, *Artisans and Architects*, 189-200.

⁹⁴ Tecton was formed at the end of 1931, Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 107-112.

⁹⁵ P.Coe and M.Reading, *Lubetkin and Tecton: Architecture and Social Commitment: A Critical Study* (1981), 54-57, 173. The Council had also seen Tecton's TB Clinic project when this was exhibited by the BMA in 1932, which strongly influenced their decision to commission the firm for the building of the Finsbury Health Centre.

⁹⁶ T.Quoidbach, 'Lubetkin in Finsbury', (Architectural Association, unpublished graduate diploma thesis, 1989), 58-9.

where 'a belief in community [lay] at the root of every significant design decision'.⁹⁷ The Leeds City architect and director of housing, R.A.H.Livett was strongly influenced by CIAM and the English MARS group. In looking for inspiration for the Quarry Hill site he and the Labour chairman of the housing committee Rev. Charles Jenkinson, turned to the Viennese housing estates where the typical architecture aimed to encapsulate the spirit of communality and where laundries, kindergartens and other shared amenities were incorporated into estate design.⁹⁸

Clearly, the housing and town planning movement in the interwar years continued to express interest in the role of communal buildings in the creation of an active and integrated community. Indeed, the increased scale of building and relocation, particularly to new housing estates outside established towns, made the issue of greater imperative. Throughout the 1930s, for example, the New Estates Community Committee of the voluntary organisation the NCSS strongly advocated the creation of Community Associations and Community Centres.⁹⁹ Community groups, it argued, could play a crucial role in breaking down the barriers of isolation which, it was felt, was an all too common feature of the new housing estates.¹⁰⁰ The lack of an established tradition of community activity in the new estates was problematic, but also provided a positive opportunity and a challenge to

those who live there to build up a community life that is something different from the life of the old towns. In the immediate absence of

⁹⁷ W.Houghton-Evans, Foreword to Ravetz, *Model Estate*, ix-x.

⁹⁸ Ravetz, *Model Estate*, 50-1.

⁹⁹ The New Estates Community Committee was established in 1928. It was representative of the NCSS, the British Association of Residential Settlements and the Educational Settlements Association. It was chaired by Ernest Barker. Although many of the members of the NCSS were non-, or anti-socialist, the body did have a number of Labour supporters and members among its membership, for example, the Labour MP Margaret Bondfield. R.Clarke (ed.), *Enterprising Neighbours. The Development of the Community Association Movement in Britain*, (1990).

¹⁰⁰ Academic surveys of interwar housing estates tended to come to similar conclusions. See, for example, R. Jevons and J. Madge, *Housing Estates. A Study of Bristol Corporation Policy and Practice Between the War*, (Bristol, 1946), 92-4. See also, Ravetz, *Model Estate*, chapter 6; M. Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action. A History of The National Council of Social Service 1919-69*, (1969), 59-92.

vested interests and competing organisations, co-operation and corporate effort may become the key note of progress. In the absence of commercialised amusements there is the greater opportunity for self-development. In the absence of conditions that have been evolved piecemeal and haphazard, there is a clear field on which to plan what the citizens themselves desire to realise.¹⁰¹

Spontaneous developments among residents were welcomed by the New Estates Community Committee, yet support was also urged from the local authority and from other social organisations. In the later 1930s local authority assistance to these projects was galvanised through the Housing Act, 1936 and Physical Training and Recreation Act of the following year, which encouraged the provision of buildings for community centres.¹⁰² Ernest Barker, the chair of the Committee, welcomed the co-operation of local authorities in this task, seeing the combination of local government and voluntary action as a fundamental component of British democratic action.¹⁰³

Town planning and housing were not the only areas of social policy to engage with discussion of the idea of neighbourhood and community-development. The unemployment problem of the early 1930s, for example, was regarded as creating a similar need to re-activate community feeling. While firmly believing that only strategies to improve employment opportunities would rectify the material problems of the situation, a responsibility attributed to government and industry, the NCSS also felt that the emotional or spiritual problems of the unemployed needed attention. This, they argued, was a matter for community effort. In addition to the bare minimum of material assistance, the unemployed 'needed friendship, a place in the community, the sense of being wanted'. This spirit of belonging could be fostered by the co-operative effort of establishing and running a community club which, while bringing activity and friendship to the unemployed workers, could benefit the wider community. At Brynmawr, for example, the unemployed combined to convert 'a rubbish heap into a recreation ground,

¹⁰¹ 'Community Work in the New Housing Estates', *Social Service Review*, 11, 5, (1930), 93.

¹⁰² Ravetz, *Model Estate*, 121; 'Opening of the Eighth Annual Conference on New Housing Estates. Address by the Rt. Hon. Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health', *Social Service Review*, 18, 4, (1937), 55-9; Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 87.

¹⁰³ E. Barker, 'Community Developments in the New Estates', *Social Service Review*, 18, 5, (1937), 73-80.

children's paddling pool, and swimming bath.' ¹⁰⁴ Health care provision, as will be seen in the next chapter, provided an further important arena for debates on the relationship between communal buildings and community spirit.¹⁰⁵

The centrality of communal buildings also continued to inform policy discussion during the reconstruction period after the Second World War. The NCSS maintained its sponsorship of this notion into the postwar period. A group from the Community Centres and Associations Committee, acting in conjunction with the town planning expert Professor William Holford, 'explored how the pre-war experience of the Council in promoting community centres and associations on new housing estates might be related to the problems of postwar reconstruction of the bombed cities', publishing a report, *The Size and Social Structure of a Town*, in 1953. The report confirmed the notion 'of the self-contained neighbourhood with its community centre, churches, schools and shops, as the basic unit for future planning whether on new housing estates, in new towns or in the redevelopment of blitzed cities'.¹⁰⁶ A fundamental component of Patrick Abercrombie's plans for postwar reconstruction which was incorporated into the designs for the new towns, the neighbourhood became a by-word for the expression of community-feeling in tangible, built form. Communal facilities remained at the core of the notion. Not only did they provide a functional role, as meeting places for residents, but as Lubetkin argued, actually contributed to the spirit of the community. Architecture, he asserted, had to be judged by 'the whole ensemble' since 'it is the interrelation of all the buildings together that reveals the aims of the community, expresses the social framework and gives it its life'.¹⁰⁷ This interest in the social effect of community facilities persisted as the New Towns were designed and developed. Lubetkin continued his own investigations into the inter-relatedness of architecture and society at Peterlee New Town,

¹⁰⁴ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 68, 72. See, for example, PRO MH 84/1: Ministry of Health Social Service Association; NCSS, *Out of Adversity*, (1937); B. Harris, 'Voluntary Action and Unemployment: Charity in the South Wales Coalfield between the Wars', in E. Aerts and B. Eichengreen, (eds.), *Unemployment and Underemployment in Historical Perspective*, (Leuven, 1990), 101-10.

¹⁰⁵ See discussion on Finsbury and Peckham Health Centres below, pages 102-119.

¹⁰⁶ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 121.

¹⁰⁷ Lubetkin, in interview with John Allan quoted in Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 379.

an experience which he hoped would be, for himself, the Peterlee community and the nation, '...a dream in our time.'¹⁰⁸

One of the most persistent themes in contemporary discussion of community and citizenship from the turn of the century to the 1950s and beyond, is the need for a balanced mix of social classes. Indeed, it could be argued that this element almost became a defining characteristic of the ideas of community and neighbourhood. Contemporary articulation of this theme stretched beyond political and social rhetoric and quickly became enmeshed in practical policy debate and proposals.

Recent historical studies of the social structure of early twentieth-century society, however, have emphasised the continuation of suspicion between the lower sections of society and the rest. Ross McKibbin's work on interwar Britain, as briefly described in the introduction, has been in the forefront of this approach.¹⁰⁹ The social division he describes between 'the public' and labour, however, finds elements of contradiction in the area of town planning policy.¹¹⁰ In academic and reformist circles, at least, an alternative argument was being developed: that mutual suspicion was activated by social polarity and a degree of integration was required if British society was to retain its stability. This 'integrationist' approach found early advocates among the town planning movement and its supporters. It was to become a long-lasting connection.

In 1903 Henrietta Barnett, the wife of Canon Samuel Barnett warden of Toynbee Hall, announced her plans for a garden suburb to the north of Hampstead Heath in a letter to the *Hampstead and Highgate Express* with the following justification: 'The seclusion of the poor in less desirable districts, and the monopoly by the rich of the more favoured portions of the suburb is not righteous....Society is impoverished by class

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Lubetkin reported in the *Daily Worker*, 25 March 1948 quoted *ibid.*, 449. Lubetkin's experience at Peterlee is discussed below, pages 82-3.

¹⁰⁹ McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class*, 270-271. See above, pages 31-2.

¹¹⁰ McKibbin's thesis, however has been translated to this area of policy. See Olechnowicz, 'The Economic and Social Development of Interwar Out-county Municipal Housing Estates'.

divisions...'¹¹¹ Aside from these moral considerations, Henrietta Barnett was alarmed at the potential social effects of increasing residential segregation, arguing:

the classes are divided, and, ignorant of each other, suspicion grows. Suspecting each other, opportunities grow for distrusting each other, and with distrust grows dislike, and after dislike comes active animosity.¹¹²

Not merely was this an inner city phenomenon, it was rapidly replicating itself in the burgeoning suburbs:

The increase of wealth has led to the formation of extensive suburbs occupied wholly by the rich or by the poor. Small properties have been cleared away from the neighbourhood of larger houses, the employers seeking sunshine have moved further 'west' and have left the employed to accumulate in the less attractive but not always uncomfortable 'East End'. The two classes have thus come to have their own local habitation in the city. Under the subtle influence of neighbourhood they form habits, develop manners, even a speech which becomes almost as distinctive as those of different nations.¹¹³

In addition, increasing residential segregation caused major structural difficulties. Government was made difficult by the low rateable values of whole areas yielding an insufficient civic income. It was unfair, but it was also inefficient. These arguments began to attract attention; inefficiency was a powerful magnet for reformers right across the political spectrum.

The Barnetts' solution, therefore, was for increased social integration both residentially and through social intercourse.¹¹⁴ Their ideas, which owe much to the developing ideas of environmental determinism, focus on the concept of neighbourhood.

¹¹¹ H.O. Barnett, 'A Garden Suburb for the Working Classes', a letter to the press, December 1903 quoted in Miller and Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb*, 19.

¹¹² H.O. Barnett, 'Science and City Suburbs', in J.E.Hand, (ed.), *Science and Public Affairs*, (1906), 54.

¹¹³ S.A. and H.O. Barnett, *Towards Social Reform*, (1909), 26-7.

¹¹⁴ Yet, as was to become more apparent later, many reformers and commentators on the left began to question the effectiveness of social integration without a broader redistribution of wealth and power. The mixed-class ideal promoted by the social settlements and by many of those interested in the garden city movement was not necessarily a call for a more equitable apportionment of status and rights; indeed, it could act as its counter. Again, it is an example of how the rhetoric of community covered a wide variation of aims and attitudes.

Familiarity, it was argued, does not breed contempt but acceptance and understanding:

Men and women who are everyday in contact with poor neighbours, who see them as they go about the streets, who hear their casual talk, and who meet them on local business, slowly and unconsciously bring about a change in their own views and in those of their neighbours. The influence of neighbourhood is very subtle...If the rich and the poor dwelt in one another's neighbourhood they would feel more sympathy with one another's ideals...¹¹⁵

This notion remained a fundamental part of ideas of town planning throughout the period, imbuing discussions on the New Towns with a similar, if updated, rhetoric. The need for this approach to community-formation seemed even more imperative in the light of the perceived social and economic trends of the period, and in response to the specific experiences of building and planning in the interwar years. The *New Survey of London Life and Labour*, produced by Herbert Llewellyn Smith and his team of social researchers in 1928, for example, produced empirical evidence of the continued segregation of the social classes in London.¹¹⁶ The situation was as the Barnetts had described before the First World War: while the middle classes were increasingly located in the burgeoning suburbs, the whole of London's inner East was conversely characterised by a high concentration of poor working-class families and an extremely low level of middle-class presence and activity. It was, moreover, a situation which found echoes in other major urban areas, particularly in the Distressed Areas, such as the North-East conurbation. This unbalanced social structure was generally deplored and, as Yelling has remarked, 'was one of the ways in which the question of social mix continued to be examined in the interwar period'.¹¹⁷ More particularly, the development of large out-county housing estates to rehouse the slum-bound working classes occasioned widespread criticism. This era of planning and housing policy was graphically represented by the huge Dagenham and

¹¹⁵ Barnett and Barnett, *Towards Social Reform*, 30. The attitudes which fed Canon Barnett's involvement at Toynbee Hall twenty years previously remained central. See A. Briggs and A. Macartney, *Toynbee Hall. The First Hundred Years*, (1984); D.E.B. Weiner, *Architecture and Social Reform in Late-Victorian London*, (Manchester, 1994), 157-79.

¹¹⁶ H. Llewellyn Smith, (ed.), *New Survey of London Life and Labour*, (1930-35).

¹¹⁷ J. Yelling, *Slums and Redevelopment. Policy and Practice in England, 1918-45*, (1992), 177.

Becontree estate on the East London and Essex borders. The London County Council at Dagenham estate became an emblem, representing the problems that could result from a social housing and planning policy which, however well meaning, failed to confront in practice the complexities of building for a mixed community.¹¹⁸ As the estate became settled it was swiftly realised that social integration required more than the building of outposts on the edge of urban civilisation.¹¹⁹

The framing of the New Towns legislation in the reconstruction period after the Second World War reveals the impact of the interwar disappointment with out-county housing estates. As Lewis Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning noted in the debate on the New Towns Bill in 1946, the estates built during the interwar years had almost invariably become 'dormitories consisting of members of one income group, with no community life or civic sense.' He stressed to members that the New Towns programme would have to be different: it 'must provide accommodation for people of all income limits....A new series of Becontrees would be fatal.' Bevan, too, echoed Silkin's sentiments, asserting that the Labour government would eschew these 'castrated communities', building instead for the 'essential psychological and biological one-ness of the community'. Once again the rhetoric of the neighbourhood unit came to the fore.¹²⁰

Yet a few voices began to query its utility as a panacea for society's ills. The sociologist Ruth Glass expressed her concerns in 1949. Firstly, she argued that the 'magic

¹¹⁸ Olechnowicz notes that the question of mixed provision of housing was indeed considered by the LCC in the development of Dagenham and Becontree, but it was of a limited nature. While mixed provision was believed to have beneficial social effects, the chief consideration was that it would 'materially assist the rateable value of the township', 'The Economic and Social Development of Interwar Out-county Municipal Housing Estates', 19-21.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*; L.E.White, *Tenement Town*, (1946), *Community or Chaos? Housing Estates and their Social Problems*, (1950).

¹²⁰ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 422, 8 May 1946, 1088; *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 414, 17 October 1945, 1222, quoted in Fielding *et al*, "*England Arise!*", 103. The Labour Party particularly drew upon the work of architect Sir Charles Reilly, Planning Consultant to Birkenhead City Council. Reilly's work stressed the importance of community by locating his houses in 'neighbourhood-units'. Echoing Raymond Unwin, Reilly centred his plans upon the village green. See L. Wolfe, *The Reilly Plan*, (1945). See also, Jevons and Madge, *Housing Estates*, 89-91; P.S.Cadbury, 'Housing Policy and Family Life, *Social Service*, 23, 3, (1949-50), 122-4.

idea of the "balanced community" lacked sensitivity to local conditions in its practical application.

Planners have been preoccupied with observing the adverse physical effects of excessively high densities in existing urban areas, and they have ignored the social compensations offered by such an environment, [such as] a sense of belonging together and of knowing each other which [residents] miss acutely when they are transferred to an area far more spacious and also far more attractively designed. The physical distance from their neighbours is interpreted as a social distance, to some it appears to imply isolation and loneliness.¹²¹

Evidence from surveys, Glass argued, also revealed that the majority of residents wished to live 'among their own kind'.¹²² In articulating this view Glass was in line with a number of writers who since the later 1930s had begun to question the soundness of the 'mixed neighbourhood' approach to the housing problem.¹²³ Certainly the physical infrastructure of many inner city areas was deplorable yet, in the eyes of their residents, this was often compensated by a positive social life and network. Mrs Bentwick's study of Bermondsey for the LCC noted that although people liked cottage homes in preference to flats they nevertheless preferred flats in Bermondsey to cottages elsewhere. 'One reason for the happy atmosphere of the Borough', she argued, 'is the fact that 95% of its population is working class. It is the mixed boroughs like Kensington and Wandsworth which lack this extreme civic pride and consciousness and sense of unity.'¹²⁴ Would newly planned mixed communities be any different?

Beyond this evidence of resident uncertainty, Glass argued, the purpose of the

¹²¹ R. Glass, 'The Social Context of the New Towns', *Architects' Year Book*, 3, (1949), 51.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Glass's earlier work (written under the name Durant) itself reveals this development. See R. Durant, *Watling. A Survey of Social Life on a New Housing Estate*, (1939); R. Glass and M. Frenkel, *A Profile of Bethnal Green*, (1946). See also, G. Campleman, 'Mixed-class Neighbourhoods: Some Sociological Aspects', *Town and Country Planning*, August, (1950), 330-2.

¹²⁴ GLRO: AR/TP/1/56. Report on Bermondsey, 3 May 1941 quoted in Yelling, *Slums and Redevelopment*, 181. This version of social analysis was, nevertheless, selective in its presentation. The tensions and social divisions within the working class were ignored. See R. Roberts, *The Classic Slum. Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century*, (Manchester, 1971).

neighbourhood unit had not been fully thought out. She felt the overriding aim of the neighbourhood unit was to aid the development of urban democracy but remained unconvinced that this could be achieved merely through the creation of neighbourhoods of mixed social classes:

as long as the external symbols of class differences are maintained - subsidised and non-subsidised houses, dwellings with varying spatial standards, ownership and tenancy - these differences might be felt even more acutely if they are all present within the same street or group of streets than if they belong to different parts of the town.¹²⁵

Could urban democracy, therefore, be fostered by alternative methods? Glass's uncertainties convey a realisation that the idea of neighbourhood was connected to the wider issue of the relationship between the citizen and the state. Increasingly during the period, planners and social commentators focused on the importance of a sense of local autonomy in the creation of active and participatory communities. From the middle 1930s several commentators isolated this issue in social surveys of new estates. Self-government for new, out-county estates was urged as a important basis for the growth of active citizenship.¹²⁶ In addition, this view was reflected in a growing concern that local government itself was being devitalised by centralised planning and provision of services.¹²⁷ The built environment itself, however important, could not provide all the solutions. Instead, the crux of the matter lay with who was to decide, who was to shape, the nature of community life. In articulating her concerns Glass asserted:

the most important link between people, and the most essential aspect of democracy, is that they should all have a share in the building and administration of their town and thus in the ordering of their lives.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Glass, 'The Social Context of the New Towns', 52-3.

¹²⁶ Jevons and Madge, *Housing Estates*, 93. For Jevons and Madge this meant an active residents' or community association and other organs of community expression rather than the local authority itself. Others highlighted the need for local authority rearrangement so that large new estates would have their own authority and not have their representation split between existing authorities as was the case with Dagenham and Becontree. Cole Papers, A1/32/7, G.D.H. Cole, 'London's Jubilee', (1939); See also Olechnowicz, 'The Economic and Social Development of Out-county Municipal Housing Estates'.

¹²⁷ This issue will be discussed in detail in Part II.

¹²⁸ Glass, 'The Social Context of the New Towns', 54.

The special nature of the New Towns, indeed, revealed the importance of community participation, since their representatives were appointees in the Development Corporation, not elected members of a local authority. As the research group PEP noted, 'It is difficult to see how in these towns the normal working of democratic institutions can be achieved *except* by close co-operation with the new inhabitants as they arrive and by their rapid integration into the existing community'.¹²⁹ Yet, Glass looked with hope at the New Towns, which she felt could, if handled with care and intelligence, provide some answers to the perennial problems of community formation and empowerment. The planner and Labour MP Gordon Stevenson also looked towards the New Towns with optimism and, echoing the aims of the early town planners, Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin, stated his belief that once the New Town local authority had taken over from the government-appointed Development Corporation '...we should see what may prove to be one of the most interesting and fruitful social and economic experiments: that of a townspeople owning the whole of their land on which their town is built. This may be the ultimate in all towns. It will come first in the New Towns'.¹³⁰ The rhetoric, if not the actual mechanisms of practical policy, had come full circle.

To a large extent the planners and sociologists who began to question the decentralised garden city planning heritage drew their inspiration, consciously or otherwise, from a second influential strand in the developing town planning movement. This sought the regeneration of existing towns and cities. The work of Patrick Geddes offers a crucial, if somewhat idiosyncratic, context to this strand of environmentalist thought.¹³¹ Ebenezer Howard firmly believed that in the twentieth century people would desert the towns and live in garden cities and, consequently, did not pay specific attention

¹²⁹ PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', *Planning*, 8 August 1950.

¹³⁰ G. Stevenson, 'New Towns', *Architects' Year Book*, 3, (1949), 44.

¹³¹ Geddes is an important figure to consider, yet he poses problems because he operated in such an unconventional manner. Hall has called him 'an unclassifiable polymath', *Cities of Tomorrow*, 137.

to the future citizens of London, Manchester or Glasgow.¹³² Geddes, however, saw the city and its region as an organic whole and a phenomenon which would, and should, continue to impress its stamp on social evolution. He believed existing cities retained much progressive potential.¹³³ Similarities with Howard's views, however, did exist. For instance Geddes, like Howard, placed reliance on new, "clean" technologies to help bring about social regeneration.¹³⁴ Geddes also agreed with Howard and many others that, at present, serious deficiencies and distortions existed in the city of the nineteenth century; indeed, Geddes belongs to the generation of writers, thinkers and philanthropists who were formulating a critique of the Industrial Revolution and its social consequences. Drawing on Ruskin's advocacy of the creation of a social system designed to serve the biological and aesthetic needs of humanity, Geddes sought a humanistic approach, which placed the interests of man in the forefront. Moreover, like Howard, Geddes exhibited elements of the anarchist tradition in his ideas. Hall suggests that through his contacts 'with French geographers at the turn of the century, Geddes had absorbed their creed of anarchistic communism based on free confederations of autonomous regions.'¹³⁵ The region was the key element in this body of thought, being the unit of 'active, experienced environment' and 'the motor-force of human development'. As such it 'was the seat of comprehensible liberty and the mainspring of cultural evolution', which was being eroded 'by the centralised nation-state and by large-scale machine industry.'¹³⁶ The key was decentralisation, to the level of the region and beyond, to the individuals who, in co-

¹³² See Howard's response to Geddes paper, 'Civics: As Applied Sociology', presented to the Sociological Society in July 1904 which is reprinted in H. Meller, (ed.), *The Ideal City*, (Leicester, 1979), 92.

¹³³ H.Meller, 'Patrick Geddes: An analysis of his theory of civics, 1880-1904', *Victorian Studies*, 16, (1973), 299.

¹³⁴ Geddes subscribed to a form of 'technological romanticism' common in the late nineteenth century. A key theorist for both Geddes and Howard was Peter Kropotkin. Geddes absorbed the Kropotkin belief that the new sources of power, particularly electric, enabled industrial organisation to be on a smaller, more decentralised, scale.

¹³⁵ Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 137.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

operation, formed cohesive units.¹³⁷ As Hall has argued, Geddes took his position from Reclus, Kropotkin and beyond them from Proudhon, believing that society had to be reconstructed not by large-scale government measures like the abolition of property, but 'through the efforts of millions of individuals', acting in co-operation.¹³⁸ The essence of Geddes's social thought is the conjunction of the individual and the community, the local with the general. He saw, in a revitalisation of the local civic spirit, the prospect for progressive social evolution.¹³⁹ Thus, the citizen is a central element in Geddes ideas. Geddes's understanding of the citizen is rooted in the traditional, local sense: residency in a city (or town) is the principal criterion. The citizen and the place are, to Geddes, dialectically inseparable.

Geddes's ideas on civics contain a vigorous conception of citizenship, extending beyond a shared knowledge of place, to entail a certain progressive dynamism. As Halliday puts it, in Geddesian civics 'the precondition of citizenship was not just social awareness, but also the drastic and planned improvement of both natural and urban environment'.¹⁴⁰ As a cog which is instrumental in driving the whole machine, the citizen of Geddes's prescription must be an active participant in the regenerative process. This element of Geddes's thought is particularly clear in his advocacy of the survey as an instrument of education and hence, civic improvement. Geddes was concerned at the seeming apathy of citizens and their lack of care or knowledge regarding their place. He found a 'common blankness to civics'. Geddes had a different citizen as his goal, '...within this labyrinthine civic complex there are no mere spectators...each has..to weave in, ill or well...the whole thread of his life'.¹⁴¹ He was optimistic that this level of

¹³⁷ The development and impact of this notion in an explicitly political and administrative context will be the subject of Part II.

¹³⁸ Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 145.

¹³⁹ His prototype Civic and Regional Museum, the Outlook Tower at Edinburgh was an expression of this perceived need for locally organised activities, where personal knowledge could create a sense of citizenship and lead to co-operative activity.

¹⁴⁰ R.J. Halliday, 'The Sociological Movement, the Sociological Society and the Genesis of Academic Sociology in Britain', *Sociological Review*, New Series, 16, 3, (1968), 393.

¹⁴¹ P.Geddes, *Cities in Evolution*, (1949 edn.), 8, 2.

participation could be attained. Geddes foresaw an imminent awakening, evidenced by the increasing occurrence of surveys and interest in civic societies: 'As this ever fresh and fascinating interest in our immediate surroundings gains upon the too common apathy, the citizen upon his daily walk...may gradually or suddenly awaken to a veritable revelation'. To Geddes, 'the essential matter for all of us is to become more and more of surveyors ourselves...'. As a consequence, 'The business and industrial toiler, the mechanical voter and member, the administrative mandarin and routinist - who all, to do them bare justice, have been vaguely striving, however sunless and indoor their lights, to make something a little better of our Paleotechnic disorder - may thus be rejuvenated, one and all, aroused, enlivened by a fresh vision, the literal "fresh eye" of art, and that of science also.'¹⁴²

For Geddes, education could provide a key to unlock this potential citizenship. At a local level, the survey would be an educational experience, acquainting the citizen with the knowledge necessary to form an opinion of the future direction of the city and region. Children were particularly targeted as the future citizens of the nascent town.¹⁴³ The aim of the survey was to collect, marshal, and exhibit data on all aspects of life in the region. The sheer physical task of this work, it was argued, would produce a new understanding amongst the citizens engaged on the project.¹⁴⁴ Education at a higher level also had a role to play in Geddes's scheme. He saw the university as an ideal focus for a regenerating city. Yet this element of the Geddesian philosophy revealed a tension between the ideal of the participatory citizen and direction from an elite body. Geddes, typically, had a term for this dualism: 'aristo-democracy'.¹⁴⁵ The problem with a latent

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 157-8. See also Mrs V.Branford, 'Civic Revival: An Account of the Progress of Civic Societies', *Sociological Review*, 15, (1923), 41-7; 'Civic Societies and their Aims', *Sociological Review*, 15, (1923), 247-9; A.Farquharson, 'Surveys and Community Life', *Sociological Review*, 22, (1930), 66-71.

¹⁴³ Much regional survey work in the interwar period was in fact undertaken in schools. Dudley Stamp's Land Utilisation Survey of Great Britain employed schools and colleges to record land use information for an intended 'snap-shot of Britain in the years 1931-5', Stamp, quoted in J.Sheail, *Rural Conservation in Inter-War Britain*, (Oxford, 1981), 145.

¹⁴⁴ Meller, (ed.), *The Ideal City*, 29.

¹⁴⁵ P. Geddes, *Dramatisations of History*, (Bombay, 1923), 174.

citizenship was that it required some precipitating factor. If this was to be education, then who was to be the educator? Geddes talks both in terms of self-education by experience but also of the guiding light of the university and those, like Geddes himself, who had already made the transition. There is a tug between the aristocratic and the democratic that was not fully resolved by Geddes. This dualism was not uncommon in early twentieth century social thought. A similar dualism was manifested by many Fabian socialists in the early years of the twentieth century and can be seen to have affected the town planning movement throughout the period under consideration. Raymond Unwin, for instance, clearly brought an ardent sense of didacticism to his work as a town planner. As part of a 'socially responsive, public professoriat', Unwin cast himself in the roles of facilitator and educator, creating the potential for friction between this prescriptive demeanour and the fostering of an active and participatory democracy.¹⁴⁶ Later town planners, such as Frederic Osborn, secretary of the Town and Country Planning Association, felt the potential contradiction even more keenly.¹⁴⁷

For Geddes the survey also had a wider educative role. Not only could it revitalise the city and its region, it could shed light on matters universal by the illumination of the local. Geddes promoted local knowledge as the essential foundation for a knowledge of the nation, or even the world, and local citizenship as an essential foundation for national- or world-citizenship. The exhibitions at his Outlook Tower at Edinburgh were designed to show in practical, visual form how knowledge of one's region could provide a key to understanding the rest of the world. The four floors of the building displayed successive exhibitions; at the top, Edinburgh and its region; below that, a room devoted to Scotland; below that, Europe, and at the bottom, the world.¹⁴⁸ The Geddesian philosophy was an assertion of decentralisation, but in the context of a broader unity of purpose. It was a powerful idea; repetitions can be found in many places in the social thought of the early twentieth century, not least within the planning movement itself, as

¹⁴⁶ Meacham, 'Raymond Unwin', 84.

¹⁴⁷ For Osborn's view see below, pages 199-201; see also above, pages 35-6.

¹⁴⁸ Meller, (ed.), *The Ideal City*, 27-28.

the New Towns movement testifies.¹⁴⁹

Geddes was an overtly non-political theorist. He addressed the problems of the city from the perspective of a natural scientist and saw his work as standing aside from the machinations of politics hoping, indeed, that it would contribute to 'the melting away of old divisions and parties, of old barriers of sects and schools, and the emergence of new possibilities, the continual appearance of new groupings of thought and action.'¹⁵⁰ Yet to many of his contemporaries, this apolitical stance was both unrealistic and limiting, blind to fundamental issues of wealth and power.¹⁵¹ Geddes's influence is difficult to trace precisely, both because of his deliberately detached stance and because of his academically unclassifiable approach which denied him a consistent audience. Nevertheless, parallels can be seen in later examples of urban planning. Berthold Lubetkin, for example, clearly developed a parallel interest in the notion of civic power. For Lubetkin, both interwar municipal socialism and postwar national reconstruction offered opportunities to restore the prestige of the city, 'both as a desirable social habitat and as an intelligent human artefact', a notion he incorporated in his term 'civic valour'.¹⁵² The plan to build Peterlee New Town in County Durham particularly appealed to Lubetkin, as it 'had not been imposed by remote bureaucratic planners in pursuit of ministerial policy; it had arisen from the local community itself as a direct result of its economic and social history.'¹⁵³ Unlike most other new towns, Peterlee was 'an exercise in concentration, not dispersal', the creation of an urban centre to replace disparate and decaying mining settlements, an aim which harmonized with Lubetkin's understanding

¹⁴⁹ The New Towns message, for example, explicitly claimed the national benefit - social, economic, even cultural - of the decentralisation of population from existing cities.

¹⁵⁰ P.Geddes, 'Civics as applied sociology, II', reprinted in Meller (ed.), *The Ideal City*.

¹⁵¹ See the report of the discussion following Geddes's paper, 'Civics: As Applied Sociology, I', reprinted in Meller (ed.), *The Ideal City*, 96, 105.

¹⁵² Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 377.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 452.

of 'civic valour'.¹⁵⁴ Lubetkin regarded his appointment as a special challenge, 'maintaining the comradeship and solidarity of the mining village tradition while at the same time broadening and diversifying the narrow, cramping patterns of economic and social life associated with it.'¹⁵⁵ The launch of the plan also echoed many Geddesian notions. It was marked by open, participatory methods, by local exhibitions, lectures and discussions and by a major social survey of the area carried out by twelve miner's wives.¹⁵⁶ Helen Rankin, author of a commentary on the Peterlee Social Survey noted, 'The success of this experiment was proof positive that the social survey is not just a professional mystery, but a technique that can be applied, given preliminary training, by any group of intelligent citizens.'¹⁵⁷

The ideas of Howard, Unwin, the Barnetts, Geddes, and through them, distilled and adapted, the messages of Ruskin, Morris, Kropotkin and the idealist philosophy of good citizenship of T.H.Green, formed the intellectual context of the nascent town planning movement. Pluralism, decentralisation, voluntary co-operation, organic community formation and citizen participation were key themes. Similar themes can be seen to emerge in the contemporary interest in health and healthcare which appeared broadly concurrently with the town planning movement: the next chapter will explore these parallels. Beyond this, however, as the state extended its sphere of influence and adapted its role from facilitator to provider of services, the issues of community and

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 454-7. Rather than continue with piecemeal improvements to the housing stock in the existing mining villages, Easington Rural District Council proposed to build a new community on a fresh location. This plan complemented the North Eastern Development Plan and the aims of the New Towns Act of 1946.

¹⁵⁵ The realities of the situation in Peterlee soon complicated Lubetkin's task, his plans severely compromised by the geological situation and by administrative complications. See *ibid.*, 464-507.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 462-3.

¹⁵⁷ H.Rankin, 'New Town for Old - The Peterlee Social Survey', Bureau of Current Affairs, Bulletin no. 75, 5 March 1949 quoted in *ibid.*, 463; M.Felton, 'Democracy in Town and Country Planning', *Political Quarterly*, 20, (1949), 81. The NCSS fostered the setting up of local history groups to enable local residents to engage with their community past and present, see Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action. A History of the National Council of Social Service 1919-1969*, (1969), 82-3.

citizenship continued to be discussed. Indeed, as the idea of planning and its practical manifestations developed over the next half century the complexities of the relationship between the state and citizens occasioned attention and interest. The ensuing debate will be the subject of the rest of this study.

3

POTENTIAL FOR PARTICIPATION

In the interwar period there was considerable discussion in the medical and general press as to the meaning of health in a modern society. In part, this interest was reflective of the general mood of the period. During the first interwar decade, with many of the foundations of the Edwardian world still left un-reconstructed, numerous Britons particularly, though not exclusively, among the intellectual and political elite turned with hope towards science and to 'its humane extension into the lives of working people.'¹ Charles Webster has noted that an important development in these interwar debates was a 'growing impatience' with the traditional terminology of health care: 'New words were called to reflect new attitudes towards health and disease'; amongst them 'positive health' and 'social medicine'.² This notable vocabulary change arguably reveals changing attitudes towards people, their needs, rights and their citizenship.

An examination of articles and correspondence in the *British Medical Journal* demonstrates the increasing use of the term 'positive health' in the later 1930s and 1940s, and even before the term itself became common, there are clear indications that its meaning and implications were gaining the attention of the medical profession.³ From a basis which owed much to contemporary understanding of preventive medicine, positive health signified the need for greater consideration of the 'normal', and attendance to

¹ Werskey, *The Visible College*, 44; D. Porter, 'Social Medicine and the New Society: Medicine and Scientific Humanism in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain', unpublished paper read at Institute of Historical Research, 16 May 1995 ; See also Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 105, 322-3 for discussion of the architect's involvement with this community of progressive scientists through, for example, the ATO. See above, pages 35-6.

² C. Webster, 'The Origins of Social Medicine', *Bulletin of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 38, (1986), 52.

³ In the early 1930s features in the medical press on broad questions of health are not usually indexed under general terms but are tied to particular problems, for example, 'tuberculosis' and 'maternal mortality'. Where a generic term is used the favoured term until c.1933 seems to be 'public health'.

health before the visible onset of disease or even of signs of ill-health.⁴ A broad conception of health was central to the idea of positive health: no longer only a matter of statistics of mortality but of 'exhaustion, ill-health, undernourishment, showing themselves in loss of vitality, deficiencies of growth, in bad nerves, and in bodies which, though whole, are inefficient.'⁵ Health, according to the 1937 survey of health services by the research group PEP, '...means more than not being ill'. It reached into the very core of social policy:

The really essential health services of the nation are the making available of ample safe fresh milk to all who need it, the cheapening of other dairy produce, fruit and vegetables, new accommodation to replace the slums and relieve overcrowding, green belt schemes, playing fields, youth hostels and physical education, social insurance which relieves the burden of anxiety on the family and advances in employment policy which improve security of tenure or conditions of work and, finally, education in healthy living through training and propaganda.⁶

Broadly concurrent with this rather general but emblematic discourse was the development of the academic discipline of social medicine.⁷ Social medicine shared many

⁴ See, for example, J.L. Brownlie, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health for Scotland, 'National Health Policy: a critical survey', *British Medical Journal (BMJ)*, 12 August 1933, 275-7. The concept was often illustrated by reference to the work of Pearce and Williamson at the Pioneer Health Centre, Peckham. See for example, G. Godwin, 'The Peckham Experiment', *The Fortnightly*, February (1934), 187-192; A.S. Playfair, 'The Health Doctors', *St Bartholomew's Hospital Journal*, November (1938), 38-40; *BMJ*, 16 July 1938, 131 and 19 November 1938, 1056-7. For the historical strength of the preventive health movement in Britain see Porter, "'Enemies of the Race": Biologism, Environmentalism and Public Health in Edwardian England', and Hardy, *The Epidemic Streets. Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventive Medicine, 1856-1900*, (Oxford, 1993). Note also the bond between town planners and the preventive medicine lobby as evidenced in the pages of the journal *Public Health* and in the *Journal of Preventive Medicine* in the Edwardian period and as cited by Porter.

⁵ 'A Palace of Health' *The Spectator*, 27 March 1936, 565-6.

⁶ Political and Economic Planning, *The British Health Services*, (1937), 395. This holistic conception of the health of individuals thus connects with the holism of much contemporary town planning and housing theory. See above chapter 2.

⁷ The *BMJ* seems to have first discussed the subject in a review of a book by René Sand, *L'Economie Humaine par la medecine sociale*, *BMJ*, 20 October 1934, 732-3. The following year the journal carried a leading article on the subject based on the work of Dr Etienne Burnett, *BMJ*, 10 August 1935, 261-2. However, the idea did not become

of the precepts of positive health: it too was founded on a broad idea of health and, indeed, of the function of science.⁸ It also incorporated a strongly environmentalist approach to health and disease and, consequently, can be seen as evidence of the continuing vitality of this tradition in British medicine.⁹ As an indefinite term, social medicine was accorded a variety of meanings in this formative period.¹⁰ This variability, however, should not detract from the usefulness of social medicine to an examination of the idea of citizenship. Indeed, the indeterminate nature of the subject occasioned much definitional discussion which can be of use in an examination of ideas on health care and citizenship.

During the 1940s, emblematic writings on social medicine revealed a number of inter-related ideas pertinent to notions of citizenship. The most important of these were that ill-health was likely to be exacerbated, even caused, by social disadvantage; that the improvement of health was of benefit to society as well as to the individual, thus making the treatment of illness the proper responsibility of society; and most significantly, that human beings should be helped to fulfil their potential. Emphasis varied between writers but, in general, the message was that improving health 'required social as well as medical action.'¹¹

One of the main protagonists of social medicine was John Ryle who became the first Professor of Social Medicine at Oxford in 1942.¹² Ryle regarded himself as a

widely discussed until the appointment of John Ryle as the subject's first professor in 1942.

⁸ Porter, 'Social Medicine and the New Society'; J.D.Bernal, *The Social Function of Science*, (1939), 353-56.

⁹ Porter, "'Enemies of the Race'"; Hardy, *The Epidemic Streets*.

¹⁰ D.Watkins, 'What was Social Medicine? A historiography of the concept (or George Rosen revisited)', *Social History of Medicine Bulletin*, 38, (1986), 47.

¹¹ N.T. Oswald, 'A Social Health Service Without Social Doctors', *Social History of Medicine*, 4, 2, (1991), 297.

¹² Ryle took up this new post after resigning the prestigious post of Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge. For a detailed examination of the ideas of John Ryle see D. Porter, 'Changing Disciplines: John Ryle and the making of social medicine in Britain in the 1940s', *History of Science*, 30, 1992, 137-164.

humanist and medicine as a humanistic science, governed by what he called 'social conscience as well as scientific intent'.¹³ The language used by Ryle in his early pronouncements on the nature of medicine is revealing. The discourse of his 1940 address to Cambridge medical students, for example, is evocative of the ideas of the settlement movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Indeed, the rhetoric bears out Jose Harris' argument for the close connection between idealist thought and the social sciences. Harris, however, is inclined to see this link as diminishing by the later 1930s. The example of Ryle suggests that it may have been a more enduring bond.¹⁴ In a section of his paper entitled 'Developing the Social Conscience' Ryle urged the students to develop as citizens and not only as clinicians:

I wish I could take everyone one of you for a walk through some of the poorer districts of London, not only to see the havoc that has been wrought there and the wretched conditions in which thousands of amazingly courageous people of the working classes are herded together nightly in their shelters, but more particularly to see the disgraceful conditions of housing which have been allowed to persist so long in twentieth century England...It is essential, too, to know and love your fellow-men and to be as much concerned with their problems as with your own.¹⁵

Ryle suggested to his students that Kropotkin's principle of mutual aid in nature was 'more effective in the long run than all the mutual conflict and destruction' and urged that this principle guide them in their part in the reconstruction of society.¹⁶ Medicine, to Ryle, could be, and ought to be, a socially integrative force.

Ryle's understanding of medicine was grounded in a holistic evolutionary

¹³ J.A.Ryle, 'Social Medicine', *BMJ*, 27 June 1942, 801; J.A.Ryle, *Fears May Be Liars*, (1941); Porter, 'Social Medicine and the New Society'.

¹⁴ See Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State'. For Ryle's views see, for example, 'Today and Tomorrow', *BMJ*, 16 November 1940, 659. For a wider discussion of the idealist impact on the scientific community, see Werskey, *The Visible College*.

¹⁵ Ryle, 'Today and Tomorrow', 658-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 659.

perspective.¹⁷ The intellectual basis of Ryle's conception of social medicine drew heavily on the ethical science advocated by contemporary scientists J.D. Bernal, Julian Huxley and C.H. Waddington which asserted the evolutionary necessity of an holistic and ethical humanism to complement what they argued were the co-operative and altruistic laws of nature.¹⁸ In addition, to Ryle, environmental conditions were a fundamental part of this living equation.¹⁹ Although a member of the Eugenics Society from 1928 to 1949 and, as such, interested in the genetic component of health, Ryle repeatedly stressed the need to address environmental impediments to health as a precursor or, at least, as an equal partner.²⁰ On this issue he shared the concerns of Lancelot Hogben, Julian Huxley and other progressive eugenicists.²¹ A fundamental premise to this concern was the belief that people generally had a positive eugenic potential which might be impeded by unfavourable environmental conditions. Ryle's interest in the aetiological contribution of environment and occupation intensified as his career developed and was exemplified in the work of his Social Medicine Unit at the University of Oxford.²²

Another figure central to the development of the ideas of social medicine was

¹⁷ Porter, 'Changing Disciplines', 147-8. See also Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', 124. Harris notes the influence of idealist thought among evolutionary sociologists.

¹⁸ Bernal, *Social Function of Science*; Conrad Waddington was the editor of *Nature* at this time and initiated a debate on the inter-relationship between science and ethics in the journal. See Porter, 'Social Medicine and the New Society'.

¹⁹ Ryle was part of a well-established environmental medical tradition. Medicine, in the later nineteenth century had become dominated by environmental discourse. This approach, however, had lost something of this predominance by the interwar years, challenged by the development of laboratory-based medicine. In this respect, Ryle represents a reassertion of the environmental tradition.

²⁰ See, for example, Ryle, 'Constitution as a factor in morbidity', *Clinical Journal*, 18 February 1931. Wellcome Institute Library, SA/Eug/C.303 and J.A. Ryle, Galton Lecture, 'Medicine and Eugenics', *Eugenics Review*, 30, 1, 1938-9, 9-11.

²¹ Porter, 'Changing Disciplines', 150, 152. For the views of Lancelot Hogben see Werksey, *The Visible College*, 105-108.

²² See, for example, J.A. Ryle, 'The Meaning of Normal', *The Lancet*, 4 January 1947, 3; *Annual Report of the Institute of Social Medicine*, (1946); I. Sutherland, 'Variations in Occupational Mortality Between and Within the Social Classes', *British Journal of Social Medicine*, 1, April 1947, 126-34.

Richard Titmuss.²³ Like Ryle, Titmuss was a member of the Eugenics Society. Titmuss's membership of the Society dates from 1937, coinciding with a period of transition within the Society exemplified by Huxley's startling environmentalist approach in the 1936 Galton Lecture.²⁴ This increasing exploration of environmental questions within a 'eugenic' context which, it might be argued, was a notable feature of the British experience of eugenics, was an important basis for social medicine.²⁵ Older eugenic concerns also provided part of the framework for the emerging discipline. Concern for the quality and quantity of the future population was expressed in terms of the concept of differential fertility, which drew attention to the fact that socially advantaged groups tended to have fewer children than disadvantaged ones. However, this attention to the basis, extent and trend of social class differences in vital statistics in fact enlarged the field of reference beyond the individual. The 'reductionist biological model of health-determination' was drawn out to envelop a more environmental view, which 'saw the life chances of individuals as settled in part by their social and material position.'²⁶ Titmuss's writings clearly show this transition.²⁷ In adding an examination of mortality rates to his studies on population, Titmuss widened the traditional eugenic focus on birth rates and, by positing the question of the relationship between social class and both of these, contributed to the ideological shift that occurred. If the poor disproportionately populated

²³ The work of Richard Titmuss is important throughout and beyond the period under study in this thesis. See Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', 137; see above, pages 29-30.

²⁴ J.Huxley, 'Eugenics and Society', Galton Lecture, *Eugenics Review*, 27, 1, 1937, 11-31.

²⁵ Titmuss was to play a large part in shaping this transitional phase through his editorial work for the *Eugenics Review* and his presence on the Eugenics Society Council. See Porter, "'Enemies of the Race": Biologism, Environmentalism, and Public Health' for the argument that this dual-approach reflected the long-held predominance of environmentalist thought within the medicine and the natural sciences.

²⁶ A. Oakley, 'Eugenics, Social Medicine and the Career of Richard Titmuss in Britain 1935-50', *British Journal of Sociology*, 42, 2, (1991), 165-94.

²⁷ See, for example, R.M.Titmuss, *Poverty and Population. a Factual Study of Contemporary Social Waste*, (1938); R. and K.Titmuss, *Parents Revolt*, (1942); R.Titmuss, *Birth, Poverty and Wealth*, (1943); J.N.Morris and R.Titmuss, 'Health and Social Change: 1. The recent history of rheumatic heart disease', *The Medical Officer*, 26 August 1944.

the nation, they also disproportionately met with untimely death. By the 1930s the population question had itself become more complicated; an ageing population and the threat of secular decline cast a different light on the situation. Titmuss recognised this factor, and responded with a call to policy-makers and the nation to 'reassess the value of the poor to the community'.²⁸ Social medicine was one way of trying to confront this problem.

Social medicine was an idea which could fit a number of uses. It was used, for instance, by socialists and others, among them the parliamentarian Dr Edith Summerskill, in the political struggle for free medicine funded by state taxation and operated by salaried practitioners.²⁹ However, social medicine was primarily an academic discipline and as a youthful contender for recognition was steered away from controversy. For example Ryle, himself a socialist and supporter of a state medical service³⁰, was concerned that the work of Titmuss and Morris on the epidemiology of rheumatic heart disease risked drawing adverse criticism due to the emphasis on 'the poverty factor'.³¹ This need for discretion emphasised the fragility of the discipline within the conservative milieu of the medical profession. However, the touchiness of the medical profession on the implications of the subject also indicated a recognition of the presence of forces of change. The timing of the rise of social medicine in Britain certainly suggests a correlation between it and the Second World War. Webster notes that the war provided

²⁸ Titmuss, *Poverty and Population*, xxiii. Lancelot Hogben had come to similar conclusions during his time as Professor of Social Biology at LSE, a chair established by Beveridge in 1929. In particular the demographic studies of his wife, Enid Charles, were beginning to show that Britain was suffering from under-population.

²⁹ Watkins, 'What was Social Medicine?', 47; Dr Edith Summerskill, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 355, 5 December 1939, 581-6.

³⁰ Although highly political, Ryle was not a member of a political party, although many of his friends in the scientific community were members of the Communist Party in the 1930s.

³¹ J.Lewis, *What Price Community Medicine? The Philosophy, Practice and Politics of Public Health since 1919*, (Brighton, 1986), 40. In addition, the *British Journal of Social Medicine*, warned its contributors that the journal was 'not meant to provide a platform for those who wish to present their views concerning the place of social medicine in the organising set-up of medicine as a whole' and, presumably, still less a platform from which to reflect what it meant in relation to society as a whole.

the new discipline with an incentive by sweeping away ‘many of the limitations of the interwar age of retrenchment....Social medicine was consistent with the ethos of rational planning for victory and for post-war reconstruction.’³² This was a view shared by contemporaries. Richard Titmuss, for example, claimed that the faltering progress of social medicine was catalysed by the ‘world-wide civil war and even more, [by] a new concept of peace.’³³ Titmuss made an explicit link between the war and changing ideas on health and citizenship: ‘One of the lessons of the war, as a citizen’s war, was the popular demand for the abolition of the poor law; of ineligible citizens; of personally merited disease; of inequality before the best ascertained laws of health.’³⁴ An apprehensive medical profession certainly saw sufficient evidence to suggest that a medical revolution was collecting ammunition. The response was to urge the restriction of connections between medicine and politics and the maintenance of medical control of the execution of health policy. Indeed, it was not uncommon for the medical profession publicly to warn off the state.³⁵ The discipline itself did retreat from the political arena but the broad ideas that lay at its base stayed in the political consciousness, becoming embedded in contemporary views on social citizenship.

The drive towards positive health that became so clear in the pages of the medical and general press in the 1930s and 1940s owed much to the national efficiency approach to social issues of the early twentieth century.³⁶ Indeed, it might be argued that it was

³² Webster, ‘The Origins of Social Medicine’, 53. Lewis presents a similar argument in *What Price Community Medicine?*, 35.

³³ Webster, ‘The Origins of Social Medicine’. See also, Sir Wilson Jameson, ‘War and the Advancement of Social Medicine’, *Lancet*, 24 October 1942, 475-480.

³⁴ R.M.Titmuss, ‘Health’, in M.Ginsberg (ed.), *Law and Opinion in England in the Twentieth Century*, (1959), 299-318.

³⁵ See, for example, the opinion of Alfred Cox, secretary of the BMA from 1912-1932, ‘The proper sphere of state medicine’, *BMJ*, 4 March 1939, 450-2.

³⁶ Indeed, there was a renewed concern for national efficiency in the 1930s, fuelled by concerns that levels of infant mortality were still too high, and about the rapidly falling birth-rate. See, for example, Titmuss, *Poverty and Population*. See also PRO MH 73 Consultative Councils of the Ministry of Health, Memorandum on the nature and extent of deficiencies in existing health services, (n.d), 4-5 for the use of national efficiency

merely an extension of 'national efficiency' and of limited use in illuminating contemporary ideas on citizenship. The language used certainly encourages this interpretation: health was frequently described as a 'material asset' of a nation and thus a prime consideration of the state; 'cost effectiveness', and the 'stocktaking' of 'national assets' were common phrases in discussions on the future direction of health policy in the early 1930s.³⁷ However, the search for positive health also entailed a recognition of human potentiality, which for many advocates implied the pursuit of an equality of opportunity in the area of health.³⁸ Health, it was repeatedly argued, meant having all the equipment to fulfil one's potential. The predominantly academic discipline of social medicine had complementary aims. It was medicine's role to understand what were the limiting factors, genetic but also, and more importantly, environmental.³⁹

Manifestations of the idea of potentiality can be found in numerous contemporary statements, mainly drawn from the medical and lay press.⁴⁰ They reveal an awareness of the relevance of health to the idea of citizenship, most particularly, in the sense of the right to equal entitlement.

In the post-war years of the early 1920s *The Spectator*, on a number of occasions, reported on the state of the nation's health. Though infused with a concerned tone, the emphasis was firmly on the opportunity for future improvement. A devastating war had been fought, but it had been won; the spirit had been proved willing, but the flesh was undeniably weak. There was no disguising 'C3 manhood' even if it did contain an A1 spirit.⁴¹ The men in the streets were not shirkers as had often been thought prior to the

rhetoric in the context of expenditure on public health services in the early 1920s.

³⁷ See for example, 'A National Health Policy', *The Spectator*, 5 December 1931, 759; 'The Nation's Health', *The Spectator*, 22 September 1933, 361-2; 'A Positive Health Policy', *BMJ*, 16 July 1932, 107-8.

³⁸ Porter, 'Social Medicine and the New Society'.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; J.Huxley, *The Uniqueness of Man*, (1941).

⁴⁰ Again, the rhetoric was used by a people from a variety of political standpoints. The limits of this consensus, however, soon became apparent once the ideas were linked to policy implementation.

⁴¹ This phrase, common in press reports at the time is a reference to the lowest category used in army medical examination reports.

war but 'lion- hearted youths, with feeble, distorted, ill-developed bodies.... Fine souls in poor bodies.' The implication is clear: the 'lion-hearted youth' was being denied his true potentiality and deserved better.⁴² Is this a recognition of rights, to a standard of health that would enable one's true potential to be unleashed? If the voice was a soft one in 1919 it certainly became stronger in the following decades. In the period from the end of the First World War to the end of the Second there were a number of health-related issues which provided a framework for the articulation of the developing ideas of positive health and social medicine. These, arguably, reflect the idea of potentiality in practice.

Throughout the 1930s the physical fitness of the nation, or lack of it, was a popular topic for discussion and became a vehicle for the articulation of opinions on the role of the state and the responsibilities of the citizen.⁴³ By the 1930s the state's role as provider of some sort of health care service was relatively well established and accepted as necessary and proper. Increasingly, emphasis was placed on how far this should extend. In 1933 *The Spectator* presented an increasingly common view:

There is now a public opinion demanding that the administrator and the scientist should step in and sweep away the limitations which have kept so much of the population on the C3 level...opportunities to become physically fit and to have the power of physical self-expression should be denied to none.⁴⁴

Although there was a general recognition of the state's responsibility to make provisions for fitness, however, emphasis was squarely laid upon the co-operative and pluralistic nature of the relationship.⁴⁵ In 1937 the government initiated a campaign to promote the use of the available health services. This was primarily an educational exercise; its main object the 'teaching [of] men and women that the maintenance and improvement of standards of health is a co-operative enterprise, to which the private citizen must

⁴² 'National Health', *The Spectator*, 1 March 1919, 256-8.

⁴³ This relatively uncontroversial subject thus provided an entry point into the wider issue of responsibility for health care.

⁴⁴ 'Health as a Duty', *The Spectator*, 27 October 1933, 565.

⁴⁵ This was a common theme in the House of Commons Debates on the question of physical fitness. See, for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 November 1936, 18-19.

contribute as much as governments.⁴⁶ It was, undoubtedly, a cosmetic exercise and as such was not without criticism. The medical profession, while giving its support to the campaign, asserted that it was hugely deficient, if not actually misplaced: 'The existing health services, which have grown up piecemeal, do not represent a national health policy. The basis of this policy should be the provision for every citizen of the general medical practitioner backed by the necessary specialist, laboratory and institutional services.'⁴⁷ Admittedly, the health education programme was introduced at a time of stringent Treasury control and general uncertainty as to the desirable limits of state provision. Although, in practice, the health campaign was merely an unsubstantiated verbal statement of the right of equal entitlement to health, the episode is instructive. The effectiveness of publicity is at least partially dependent on the ready reception of the ideas presented. Whatever this campaign lacked in substantial measures it was couched in terms of active participation and as such, was welcomed. This element is clarified if the campaign is seen in conjunction with the Physical Training and Recreation Act of the same year which sought the co-operation of existing clubs and the developing community association movement.⁴⁸ Ideological undertones differentiating the ways of fascism from those of democracy were present and were influential on the content and format of the fitness and health campaigns. Though in line with the existing publicity policies of the

⁴⁶ 'The Nation's Health', *The Spectator*, 1 October 1937, 537-8. Sir George Newman's legacy on health policy was a tenacious one: his view of the importance of health education remained a favoured approach to health care. The limitations of this approach were noted by the government. Lord Horder, for example, accepted that health and economics could not be separated. It was not the business of doctors to solve the economic problem but they could, and should, be aware of the implications it posed to health. 'Health with happiness', *BMJ*, 30 October 1937, 853-4.

⁴⁷ 'The Nation's Health', *The Spectator*, 1 October 1937, 537-538.

⁴⁸ The co-operative principle was written into the Act; the 22 Local Area Committees established by the Physical Fitness National Advisory Council, were to receive applications for grants from both local authorities and local voluntary organisations. The link between the new Act and the community centre movement was frequently discussed in the pages of *Community*, the journal produced by the Midlands section of the National Council of Social Service. See for example, K. Lindsay, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, 'Forward to Fitness', *Community*, 1, 1, (1937); Lord Aberdare, Chairman of the National Fitness Council, 'The National Fitness Campaign', *Community*, 1, 4, (1938); see above, pages 69-70.

Ministry of Health and Board of Education, the use of voluntary organisations in the campaigns was given a new ideological significance.⁴⁹ A mandatory scheme was advocated by some, but the prevailing view was that such 'German methods' were incompatible with British traditions.⁵⁰ The favoured approach was a combination of voluntary action with state encouragement and the relevance of this policy to citizenship was noted. Lord Burghley, the Conservative member for Peterborough echoed the thoughts of many, and not only from his side of the House, when he attested to the value of unforced physical development in the advancement of 'a feeling of the responsibility of citizenship.'⁵¹

Another issue extremely relevant to the development of ideas on health, potentiality and, by inference, citizenship in the 1930s and 1940s, was nutrition. Awareness of the link between income, diet and nutrition was heightened by John Boyd Orr's study, *Food, Health, Income* of 1936. The connection of malnutrition with variations in working-class income and with poverty was graphically presented: a tenth of the population, including a fifth of all children, were chronically ill-nourished, and a half of the population suffered from some sort of deficiency.⁵² Orr's work did not escape criticism, not least from officialdom, but it was endorsed by other studies and statements.⁵³ G.C.M. M'Gonigle, the Medical Officer of Health for Stockton-on-Tees, found that the death rate among the poorer section of the population, spending only 3s

⁴⁹ M. Grant, 'The National Health Campaigns of 1937-1938' in D. Fraser (ed.), *Cities, Class and Communication. Essays in Honour of Asa Briggs*, (New York, 1990), 216-33.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, 22 October 1936.

⁵¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 317, 175-179. Harold Nicolson, the National Labour M.P. for West Leicester, urged a place in the scheme for existing voluntary clubs and associations on a similar basis.

⁵² The relationship between national health and standards of nutrition began to be recognised in the context of the high levels of maternal mortality among poor women. The National Birthday Trust, for example, distributed free food in the Special Areas in 1934, and this had a significant effect on the death rate. See V. Berridge, 'Health and Medicine' in Thompson (ed.), *Cambridge Social History of Britain*, Vol. 3, 231-2.

⁵³ C. Webster, 'Healthy or hungry thirties?', *History Workshop Journal*, 13, (1982), 112-3.

a head on food, was twice that of the most affluent, who allowed 6s a head.⁵⁴ Official stubbornness in the face of such findings did soften in the 1930s, with the nutrition question given prominence in official reports, often in conjunction with unemployment. In the later 1930s it became common for general press articles on health and fitness to conclude with an appeal for a better standard of nutrition since however beneficial was physical training, it could not be 'indulged in upon an empty stomach.'⁵⁵ The message from the House of Commons was similar particularly, though not exclusively, from the opposition benches.⁵⁶ The medical press provided an additional forum for discussing the issue. Reports relating to the nutrition question were summarized, and often formed the basis of leading articles in the later 1930s and early 1940s.⁵⁷ The war brought a new urgency to the question.⁵⁸ Sir John Boyd Orr again entered the field and argued for an inclusive approach to health care: '...for the prevention of deficiency diseases we need a supply of protective foods sufficient for the needs of the whole population and at a price within the purchasing power of everybody. This involves economic and political problems which are regarded as being outside the sphere of medicine.' Orr urged the breakdown of such unrealistic barriers if the medical profession was to play a part in the 'building up of the new and better world for which all men are hoping.'⁵⁹ Potentiality is

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* See also, for example, Sir R. McCarrison, Cantor Lecture on 'Nutrition and National Health', summary in *BMJ*, 29 February 1936, 427-430; the report of the International Labour Office, 'Workers' Nutrition and Social Policy' summarized in the *BMJ*, 11 July 1936, 75-6. Contrast the optimistic reports of the Ministry of Health Annual Reports throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

⁵⁵ 'Health as a duty', *The Spectator*; 'To eliminate the C3s', *The Spectator*, 21 June 1935, 1053-4, *The Spectator*, 1 October 1937, 537-8.

⁵⁶ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol.317, 4 November 1936, 97-98, 104, 150-1.

⁵⁷ Often international or foreign reports and surveys, a tactical distancing, perhaps, but nevertheless an indication of the increased interest in the subject.

⁵⁸ Sir A. MacNulty, 'The Public Health in Wartime', *BMJ* 2 March 1940, 333-6; Sir W. Jameson, 'War and the Advancement of Social Medicine', *The Lancet*, 24 October 1942, 479.

⁵⁹ Sir J. Boyd Orr, 'Trends in Nutrition', *BMJ*, 18 January 1941, 73-77. Orr acknowledged that the issue of health spread even further: 'Bad housing and overcrowding...and the feeling of impotence in the face of environmental difficulties common among the poor are probably as potent causes of ill-health a faulty diet...Until

a clear theme in Orr's writing. Nutrition, he argued, was vital for the children 'who when they grow up will need all their physical and mental powers to clear away the wreckage of the present war and build the new and better post-war world for which we are all hoping.'⁶⁰ The pages of the *British Medical Journal* reverberated with Orr's themes for some time. In a leading article in the same issue, the journal reflected on the wider implications of Orr's message: '...What we are witnessing is a heightened consciousness of social responsibility in a world in which the forces of disruption are momentarily paramount.' The *Journal* sympathized with Orr's view that the profession should endorse 'what Mr Churchill has called "the march of the common people towards their just and true inheritance and towards the broader and fuller life".' This, it argued, must be based on 'good food, good housing, free opportunity for physical and mental development, and comprehensive medical services for the whole community.'⁶¹ The journal suggested that a 'medical charter' should be created, outlining the standards for these desiderata.⁶²

Potentiality was also a theme of discussions on rehabilitation in the medical and related press in the 1940s.⁶³ Rehabilitation, usually industrial, was an old issue re-fuelled

they have all been eliminated we will not be able to attain the high standard of national health and physical fitness which we know can be attained. They all tend to be associated with poverty.'

⁶⁰ Orr also outlined contemporary research work by educationalists into the impact of poor nutrition on educational standards. *Ibid.*, 75. In a wider sense too, education became the focus for discussions on potentiality, with educationalists and policy advisors exploring the best means to widen opportunities. See, for example, R.H.Tawney, *Secondary Education for All*, (1922), and *Labour and Education*, (1934).

⁶¹ The leading article was published under the title (in itself revealing of the mood) 'Medicine in a changing world' and formed part of a series of leading articles under that name, *BMJ*, 18 January 1941, 91.

⁶² The idea of such a charter does suggest the recognition of rights, although these remained unspecified.

⁶³ *The Lancet's* reaction was highly positive: '...of its latent possibilities on a grand scale no-one with vision can have the slightest doubt.' 23 January 1943, 113. The *BMJ* was more sober, noting in its leading article, 'Rehabilitation: the Duty of Social Medicine', 13 March 1943, that 'rehabilitation' was a fashionable word covering practices that had long been implemented. But it is the obvious popularity of the word that is interesting in this context. Lord Horder notes of rehabilitation '...today the word is on the lips of the doctor as the word Reconstruction is on the lips of the general public. The politician has

by the war⁶⁴ It was also closely linked to the academic interest in social medicine.⁶⁵ The broad implications of rehabilitation seem to have been noticed by contemporary social commentators: the Beveridge Report, for example, used the term and urged its application in the post-war world. Official interest in the subject was sufficient to merit the establishment of an Interdepartmental Committee, the Tomlinson Committee, which reported in 1943 recommending that money and time be spent on this issue.⁶⁶ Lord Horder welcomed the juxtaposition of rehabilitation and reconstruction, noting: 'It is of no use to rehabilitate a man if the conditions of society are such that they give no reasonable scope for his activities when the process is complete.'⁶⁷

A common theme in discussions on rehabilitation was that room could and should be found for everybody: 'What after all, is a disability?', asked an article in the *British Medical Journal*. 'Some disabilities may prevent employment in certain occupations, but may even be an advantage in others....' With the wartime shortage of labour, it continued, 'the disabled man becomes a potential asset'.⁶⁸ This attitude remained, *The Lancet* noting: 'It seems inconceivable now that we should revert after the war to a system that left the

caught the refrain even if he has not clearly understood the process', *Physical Medicine and Industrial Hygiene*, May-June, (1943), 80.

⁶⁴ The labour shortage drew attention to the need to utilize all available labour and industrial rehabilitation learnt from such developments in the services. See, for example, F.D. Howitt, 'Rehabilitation and the War', *Physical Medicine and Industrial Hygiene*, May-June, (1942), 81; R. Watson-Jones, 'Rehabilitation in the Royal Air Force', *BMJ*, 28 March 1942, 403-5.

⁶⁵ The broad principles of social medicine are reflected in discussions on rehabilitation. For example, Brigadier F.D. Howitt outlined the holist approach employed at the Ministry of Labour industrial rehabilitation centre at Egham: 'Rehabilitation involves the study of the whole man. The physical, psychological, social, educational, and environmental aspects must all be borne in mind', *BMJ*, 8 July 1944, 52-3. See also, *The Lancet*, 5 December 1942, 672.

⁶⁶ *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Rehabilitation*, Cmd. 6415, (1943). The Report led to the 1944 Disabled Persons (Employment) Act which in turn was used by the Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin to set up Remploy. See PRO BM10/1, A History of Remploy Ltd.

⁶⁷ Horder, *Physical Medicine and Industrial Hygiene*, 80.

⁶⁸ 'The Heritage of Disablement', *BMJ*, 4 May 1946, 687.

disabled man derelict and demoralised to eke out his miserable years on public assistance.⁶⁹ The *British Medical Journal* suggested a way forward:

This is not a matter for charity any more than is the payment of the interest on the National Debt. The country must accept the fact that a certain proportion of its citizens are permanently disabled...The important thing, for the sake of the disabled themselves as well as for the sake of the community, is to readjust them to such work as they can do.⁷⁰

A key element of the rehabilitation programme was the rehabilitation centre. A number of centres were established in the wartime period, usually associated with the Armed Services or the Ministry of Labour.⁷¹ However, other organisations, for example, the Miners' Welfare Commission, developed a programme for rehabilitation.⁷² A number of these centres incorporated the active involvement of local people in a way reminiscent of the industrial Medical Committees of the interwar years.⁷³ In the mining area of Lanarkshire, an Executive Committee in charge of rehabilitation services was established consisting of members of the Lanarkshire Medical Practitioners' Union, the Coalmasters' Association and the Mineworkers' Union. Initial suspicions that the centre was an attempt to coerce the miner to return to his labour, with the surgeon 'apt to appear to him as an ally of the compensation authorities', gradually subsided, the treatment centre coming to be accepted purely as a treatment centre with the patients' interests at heart.⁷⁴

The three health and fitness concerns examined here - physical fitness, nutrition and the rehabilitation of war and industrially-injured workers - aroused discussion of a number of notions which together fed into the mosaic of ideas that linked health with

⁶⁹ 'Fitness Centres', *The Lancet*, 5 December 1942, 672.

⁷⁰ 'Rehabilitation: the Duty of Social Medicine', *BMJ*, 13 March 1943, 322-3.

⁷¹ For example, the Ministry of Labour centre at Egham.

⁷² 'Resettlement', *The Lancet*, 18 November, 1944.

⁷³ The South Wales miners, for example, had managed to establish a high degree of self-government in their miners' medical committees. Workman administered the club funds and employed the doctors. See R.J. Earwicker, 'The Labour Movement and the Creation of the National Health Service, (University of Birmingham, unpublished PhD, 1982), 47-53; A.J.Cronin, *The Citadel*, (1937).

⁷⁴ A. Miller, 'Late Rehabilitation of the Injured, a Survey of Seven Years Experience in an Industrial Clinic', *BMJ*, 22 August 1942, 209-212.

citizenship. Inclusiveness became a powerful theme. Not only was health discussed broadly and in conjunction with a wide range of social and economic policies, but it was articulated as the birthright of all, the proper aim of a civilised and human society which valued human potentiality in all its guises. To activate and foster this better world, co-operation, between state and citizen, and between statutory and voluntary agencies, was needed. Yet, here the submerged differences between the various groups and individuals seeking such changes began to impinge upon the debate. The appropriate role of respective statutory and voluntary agencies in shaping health policy, and the perceived implications of this interactive relationship on citizenship became the focus of debates.

The general discussions on the meaning of health in the 1930s-1940s reflect a changing attitude to the people and their citizenship: there is a traceable, if imprecise, awareness of the right of all people to health and a broad, if shallow, consensus of the need for some degree of state intervention to achieve this ideal. Further insights can be gleaned from practical examples of health care. The health centre, for instance, is a useful reference point for an examination of the relationship between health care provision and citizenship since it is a feature of health debates throughout the interwar and reconstruction period, and directly posed questions of where responsibility and accountability for health care should lie. The health centre was described as the future direction of primary health care provision in the Ministry of Health-sponsored Dawson Report of 1920. It was presented as the means to integrate preventative and curative care and as a response to the 'increasing conviction that the best means of maintaining health and curing disease should be made available to all citizens.'⁷⁵ An expression of the idea

⁷⁵ PRO ZHC1/8147/1920. Ministry of Health, Consultative Council on Medical and Allied Services, *Interim Report on the Future Provision of Medical and Allied Services*, Cmd. 693, (1920), 5. The health centre idea also features in a book of Dawson's *Cavendish Lectures*, (1918). Sir Bernard Dawson, the chairman of the responsible committee had been a major figure in the army medical service, and had long been aware of the social considerations of health. In shaping the notion of the health centre Dawson drew heavily on the model of the education service as developed by Sir Robert Morant in the early years of the twentieth century. It is likely that he took the terms 'primary' and 'secondary', which he applied to the local and district health care institutions, from this source. In addition, he looked to the school medical service, created in the aftermath of the Boer War, as exemplifying the interconnectedness of curative and preventive medicine. See Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus', 122-3. See also F. Watson, *Dawson*

is also to be found in a Labour Party report of 1919.⁷⁶ From 1933 onwards the health centre was a major feature in the policy statements of the Socialist Medical Association, Medical Practitioners' Union and the Labour Party.⁷⁷ It became a topical phrase in the later 1930s, publicized by the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham and the municipal experiment at Finsbury. The health centre reached a hypothetical peak in the National Health Service Act of 1946 but this paper prominence was left unsupported by practical developments due to the postwar building material shortage and general practitioner distrust until the 1960s and 1970s.

In the interwar and reconstruction periods a number of widely differing conceptions of the health centre developed. On one level, the attributes of a health centre were generally recognised as including the collaboration of skills and the division of labour among a range of personnel working under one roof, the widespread use of modern therapeutic and diagnostic techniques and, finally 'the diffuse implication that health centres would pay more positive regard to maintenance of health rather than merely react by treating disease.'⁷⁸ However, crucial questions of responsibility and administrative structure, questions vital to an understanding of the relationships between the patient, community, medical profession and the state, were left undefined. For example, A.H.T. Robb-Smith, a Reader in Pathology at Oxford, noted that while there was general agreement that groups of general practitioners with secretarial assistance would

of Penn, (1950).

⁷⁶ Labour Party, Advisory Committee on Public Health, *The Organisation of the Preventive and Curative Medical Services and Hospital and Laboratory Systems under a Ministry of Health*, (1919). Reissued as Labour party and TUC, *The Labour Movement and Preventive and Curative Medical Services. A Statement of Policy with Regard to Health* in 1922. In addition, elements of the health centre idea had been present in documents produced by the State Medical Service Association, an organisation established in 1912 and closely aligned with the Labour party. Though clearly evolving at similar times, the Labour party's health centre policy and that of Dawson have one very clear point of division as Webster points out: 'Dawson's predominant concern was to devise a fully co-ordinated State Medical Service free from full-time salaried service'. Labour, however, demanded the opposite, 'Conflict and Consensus', 137-8.

⁷⁷ Webster, *The Health Services since the War. Vol. 1: Problems of Health Care, The National Health Service Before 1957*, (1988) , 380-1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 380.

be a good thing, there was 'considerable disagreement as to who should provide and equip these centres'.⁷⁹ Between the 1930s and 1950s several different interpretations could be seen, both in theory and in practice; an examination of these reveals the open-endedness and contested nature of the idea of citizenship and the varied definition of the boundaries between the state, both central and local, and civil society.⁸⁰

A general feature of discussions on the health centre in the 1930s and 1940s was its particular association with a community of people: it was designed to serve a particular neighbourhood or area and to be the focus of the area's health services.⁸¹ This inherent feature makes the discussions on health centres in this period an interesting source on the relationship between the providers and recipients of care and between the centre and the local community. Sir Bernard Dawson's conception of the health centre was undoubtedly localist; the services of the health centre, he suggested, would be 'established by local enterprise'.⁸² However, this to Dawson meant the centrality of the general practitioners of the area, rather than the local people themselves.⁸³ There was

⁷⁹ A.H.T.Robb-Smith, *The Lancet*, 28 August 1943, 243-49. As late as 1947 *The Lancet* was asking how, and by whom, would health centres be run. Questions of responsibility and accountability for the delivery of welfare services and the implementation of other major planks of social and economic policy will be discussed in greater detail in Part II.

⁸⁰ The varying viewpoints developed in the context of health centre policy are reflected in broader health care debates, as noted by Webster in his analysis of the conflict and consensus over the regionalisation of health care debates. Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus'.

⁸¹ The debate on the community function of the health centre complemented the concurrent discussion of the importance of community centres and other neighbourhood buildings in cementing local relationships. See above, pages 67-72.

⁸² *Interim Report on the Future Provision of Medical and Allied Services*, 7. The locally-organised health centres, however, would be planned and co-ordinated from a regionally-based health authority, which he envisaged would be an *ad hoc* elected body concerned solely with the health services, a mechanism which would be able to protect the autonomy of the medical profession while providing access to public funds and enabling the distribution of health services to be planned and co-ordinated. The interest in regionalism as an organising concept of local administration, and the contested nature of its contemporary usage, will be explored in greater detail in chapter 4.

⁸³ Dawson was echoing the views of his colleagues in the medical profession in his antipathy to local authority control of health centres, seeing this administrative solution as an insuperable challenge to the professional autonomy of medical practitioners.

little sense of mass active participation in Dawson's idea beyond the Edwardian view that the people themselves should be, in large part, responsible for their own health, with responsibility to be developed through health education.⁸⁴ Dawson's somewhat narrow view might be contrasted with the attitude of Ernest Barker, Professor of Political Science at Cambridge and Chairman of the NCSS, who saw the health centre as contiguous with the community centre movement which the NCSS was so strongly advocating.⁸⁵ A similar view is found in PEP's understanding of the health centre as expressed in their report on the 1944 Health Services White Paper. The importance of local involvement in the health centre was stressed: 'If the people of a neighbourhood regard it as their own institution, established at their wish' the group argued, 'they will take full advantage of its services.'⁸⁶ PEP regarded the health centre as a socially integrative force. People could 'meet their doctors outside the surgery and the sick-room in the centre's lecture-hall or in the community centre.' It could provide an arena for mutual discussion and questioning and a means of 'equipping doctors and other health workers with that intimate knowledge of the "consumer" of the health service which they often lack today':

Doctors would learn to treat their patients not as irresponsible children but as adult fellow-citizens....Whatever the scale of social and educational activities at a health centre, they can be a powerful instrument for breaking down the barriers of ignorance, misunderstanding and prejudice - on both sides - and to replace the "bottle of medicine" atmosphere by intelligent human relationships.⁸⁷

Moreover, the Dawson recipe contrasted strongly with the emerging health centre policy of the Labour party which stressed the importance of community responsibility for the service, operating through the democratically-elected, politically-responsive local

⁸⁴ This didactic approach is typified by the attitudes of the Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education and the first Chief Medical Officer of Health Sir George Newman. See A. Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal*, 5, (1978), 9-60; C. Dyehouse, 'Working-class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England, 1895-1914', *Journal of Social History*, 12, (1978-9), 248-67.

⁸⁵ E. Barker, Chadwick Public Lecture on 'Community Centres in relation to public health', *BMJ*, 14 May 1938, 1066-7. Barker was particularly impressed with this aspect of the Peckham Pioneer Health Centre. Also see above, pages 69-71.

⁸⁶ PEP, 'Medical Care for Citizens', *Planning*, 222, June 1944,

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

authorities.⁸⁸ The health centre's relationship with the local community in an administrative sense became increasingly pertinent in the later 1930s. Local authorities began to consider the health centre option in conjunction with wider plans for the development of the community. In particular, the health centre became administratively associated with housing schemes and estate building. London County Council Health Committee minutes and memoranda clearly reflect this tandem development. Prospective housing development at Bellingham in Lewisham, for example, set in motion LCC discussion on the provision of a health centre as part of the community centre site on the new estate.⁸⁹ The Council's Medical Officer of Health, Dr Allan Daley, noted that provision was likely to be necessary since the expected population would be of the 'clinic class'. Daley's turn of phrase, which assumed a correlation between a council tenancy and the need for municipally-provided health services, reflects how closely the question of health care and a person's socio-economic status were related in the pre-NHS period.⁹⁰ The Woodbury Down Health Centre, Stoke Newington, first of the few 1946 Act health centres, began life in a similar manner. Discussions on the need for a centre began in 1938 before the building of the Woodbury Down housing estate.⁹¹ The association of

⁸⁸ Webster, *The Health Services since the War*, Vol.1, 380-1. The Dawson approach, as articulated in the Interim Report of the Consultative Council, also contrasted with the Ministry of Health's favoured option of local authority control, a view passed on from Sir Robert Morant. Morant's views on health owed much to his great friends, Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Morant's posthumous influence, however, was countered by the presence of the Permanent Secretary, Sir Arthur Robinson, who, according to Webster, brought 'to his office the parsimonious instincts of the workhouse', 'Conflict and Consensus', 138, 141-2. Labour's commitment to local authority-based health care was replicated in the party's rejection of an extension of medical provision through the National Health Insurance approved societies. Local authorities, they argued, offered greater opportunity for participatory citizenship than the approved societies, dominated by the huge insurance companies, did. See Dauntton, 'Payment and Participation', 204.

⁸⁹ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/3. Memorandum from the Divisional Medical Officer of Health to Dr. Allen Daley, Medical Officer of Health, 10 November 1937.

⁹⁰ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/3, Memorandum of Dr Allen Daley, 17 November 1937.

⁹¹ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/6, Minutes and memoranda of the Health Committee on health centre proposals for the Woodbury Down Housing Estate 1938-1946.

health centres with newly developed areas strengthened after the passage of the 1946 Act.⁹² This approach, however, owed little to PEP or Labour's conception of neighbourhood self-responsibility for health. It was largely a matter of political expediency. In order to avoid problematic clashes between Local Medical Committees and Local Health Authorities health centres were mostly restricted to green field sites.⁹³ Consequently, as Webster has noted, 'the few positive moves towards health centre development were conducted in the context of new towns and housing estates with more than 2,500 houses.'⁹⁴ Those authorities that did initiate wider plans encountered obstacles. For example, in 1948 Sheffield Borough Council received general approval from the Minister of Health for its proposals to adapt the Firth Park Maternity and Child Welfare Centre into a comprehensive health centre. Although six doctors initially agreed to move, as time went on interest waned and by 1951 a small majority of local doctors decided against the scheme and the local medical committee agreed to advise the local Executive Council not to recommend the continuation of the plans.⁹⁵ The self-interest of the medical profession overshadowed and complicated the issue from the start.⁹⁶

Original intentions rarely survive the rigours of practical expression unscathed and certainly in the case of the community health centre this process was an awkward one. Indeed, it is worth submitting the early practical examples of the health centre to detailed

⁹² See, for example, PRO: MH134/48, Health Centre Committee, minutes of meeting, 9 July 1947; GLRO: LCC/PH/GEN/1/34, Memorandum, Public Health Department Central Planning Division, National Health Service Wandsworth Borough Council Health Centre; A.Talbot Rogers, 'Health Centre Prospects', *The Spectator*, 17 September 1948, 363-4.

⁹³ For example, Somerville Hastings of the SMA noted that a proposal by the LCC to provide at the Hampstead Health Institute a modified health centre for group practice was turned down by the Minister of Health on the grounds that the area was already well supplied with doctors, 'Why no health centres?', *The Spectator*, 1 June 1951, 713.

⁹⁴ Webster, *The Health Services Since the War*, 383. Soon, however, even this limited application was overtaken by events. The NHS came under pressure because of the escalation of costs, with the result that virtually all capital development was eliminated.

⁹⁵ Somerville Hastings 'Why no Health Centres?', 713.

⁹⁶ Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus', 139; Eckstein, *English Health Service*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 247-52; P. Hall *et al* (eds.), *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy*, (1975), 277-310; M. Ryan, 'Health Centre Policy in England and Wales', *British Journal of Sociology*, 19, (1986), 34-46.

examination. In the 1930s the Local Authority-run Finsbury Health Centre and the independent Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham received considerable attention.⁹⁷ The following section examines the implications for the idea of citizenship raised by these centres. However, an evidential point should first be mentioned. Peckham has the advantage of having been established and run by two extremely committed people, eager to use the centre as a vehicle to publicise their own scientific ideas. As a consequence, the Peckham Centre's aims were amply recorded. Finsbury, as a local authority centre, has not left such information. The Borough Council minutes are characteristically brief. However, supplementary information is obtainable from the architect, Lubetkin, and his firm Tecton, who were commissioned by the council for this project.⁹⁸ An examination of Lubetkin's ideas for the health centre reveals interesting elements pertinent to a more active conception of citizenship which are often missed in confining attention to the official records of the Centre and its status as a local authority service.

The Finsbury Health Centre opened in 1938 under the auspices of the Labour-controlled metropolitan borough council. It was based on the provisions of the Public Health (London) Act of 1936 which empowered borough councils to provide suitable medical services for the poorer inhabitants. Within this framework, accommodation was found for administrative, sanitary, and health visiting staffs, the tuberculosis clinic, public health laboratory, cleansing and disinfecting stations, and mortuary. The centre was built beside a mother and child welfare clinic and included a dental clinic, foot clinic, womens' clinic and a physiotherapy department in addition to the statutory provisions. Finsbury Borough Council, it appears, attempted to make full use of its rather restricted powers and in doing so, it could be argued, accepted responsibility for the health of its

⁹⁷ See, for example, F. Singleton, 'Health Centres: Two Styles', *The Spectator*, 28 October 1938, 708-9. The health care activities of Bermondsey Borough Council provide an additional example of contemporary innovation in the politics of local medical care. See E. Lebas, "'When Every Street Became a Cinema". The Film Work of Bermondsey Borough Council's Public Health Department, 1923-1953', *History Workshop Journal*, 39, (1995), 42-66; F. Brockway, *Bermondsey Story. The Life of Alfred Salter*, (1949), 168-171. The work of the council included the building of a health centre in 1936.

⁹⁸ The development of Lubetkin's ideas have been ably demonstrated elsewhere, most recently in Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*.

citizens.⁹⁹

The philosophy of local authority public health departments seems to be an amalgamation of an individualistic approach and a 'national efficiency'-inspired collectivism. The services offered at Finsbury attest to the preoccupation with the hygiene and treatment of the individual but the basic rationale seems to have been the health interests of the wider community. A pertinent example is the disinfecting station where the family and its possessions could 'be rendered sanitary.'¹⁰⁰ There seems to be little immediate evidence that Finsbury utilized an active conception of citizenship in its provision of services apart from the health education approach that had been common in mother and infant welfare centres since the early years of the twentieth century and in the views of Newsholme and Newman.¹⁰¹ A Webbian emphasis on centralized expertise and efficiency seems to be the strongest motivation. However, a closer look at the events leading to the building of the Health Centre encourages a modification of this interpretation. Although the health centre is often discussed in terms of 'rationality', of the efficiency of a purpose-built centre housing all the borough's medical services and public health administration, it seems to have represented much more than this.

There seems little doubt that the motivation for the building of the centre owed much to the political prominence of the left in Finsbury and also on the LCC. Labour managed to gain control of the LCC and fifteen borough councils in 1934. Under the LCC's wing these boroughs began to attempt the implementation of Labour policies. Finsbury undertook this task voraciously, motivated by its leader Alderman Riley, a 'devout socialist'.¹⁰² A Labour representative until the end of the war, Riley took a great

⁹⁹ The health services of metropolitan boroughs were administered partly by the borough council and partly by the London County Council.

¹⁰⁰ Singleton, 'Health Centres, Two Styles', 708.

¹⁰¹ Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood'; Dyehouse, 'Working-class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England'; A. Newsholme, *Fifty Years in Public Health*, (1935); see Hardy, *The Epidemic Streets* for a longer-term view of the role of public health medicine and Medical Officers of Health since the time of Sir John Simon in the 1850s.

¹⁰² A similar motivation is in evidence at Bermondsey which according to Fenner Brockway spread 'the cause of Health with an enthusiasm reminiscent of socialist propaganda'. Brockway, *Bermondsey Story*, 170.

interest in the conditions of borough residents, regarding health care and housing as the most pressing questions facing the borough.¹⁰³ In the area of public health this enthusiasm was bolstered by the presence of Dr C.L.Katial, the chairman of the public health committee and probably the prime motivating force for the creation of a health centre.¹⁰⁴ The left-wing press repeatedly emphasised the connection between the centre and the ideals of socialism.¹⁰⁵ The idea of citizenship, particularly in the sense of equal entitlement, was invoked as an example:

The improvements and facilities that the health centre offers to its patients is in harmony with the whole direction of Socialist control. The patient is no longer to be considered as a charge upon a State machine - an unfortunately necessary charge to be dealt with in the speediest and cheapest manner. It is now being appreciated that a citizen is entitled to all the advantages of modern science and that he must receive these advantages ungrudgingly as is his right as a citizen.¹⁰⁶

As the annual reports of the Medical Officer of Health, Nicholas Dunscombe, reveal, Finsbury had urgent need of improved medical care.⁰⁷ Yet the services offered at the centre went beyond the statutory requirements for borough councils.

In addition, the health centre seems to have been conceived with more than functional considerations in mind. According to John Allan, Lubetkin recalled that

the recurrent analogy in the formative stages of discussion was that of an open-access club, with an atmosphere that would inspire confidence in the public such that they would feel comfortable in calling in at any time - regardless of appointment or even of any desire to see a clinician. Indeed, it was initially suggested that no reception counter should be located in the

¹⁰³ Coe and Reading, *Lubetkin and Tecton*, 141.

¹⁰⁴ Finsbury Borough Council, *Official Minutes*, Public Health Committee, 16 June 1936. See also 'Once a Slum - Now Finsbury's New Health Centre', *Nursing Mirror and Midwives' Journal*, 15 October 1938, 78-79. P. Reilly, 'The Modern Architect is on Your Side', *The News Chronicle*, 19 October 1938, 10.

¹⁰⁵ See for example, 'Labour's Health Centre Example', *The Daily Worker*, 19 October 1938, 2a, 5. Of course, much of this was for propaganda purposes, particularly in the build-up to local elections.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁰⁷ See, for example, Finsbury Borough Council, *Annual Report on the Public Health of Finsbury for the year 1935*, (1936).

foyer in order to avoid even the hint of bureaucratic supervision.¹⁰⁸

This thought was translated into practice in the choice of furnishings at the Centre. The original use of loose furniture and standard lamps to be 'informally strewn around the foyer instead of the usual serried rows of benches, was a deliberate attempt to underline this relaxed "drop-in" ambience as opposed to the stereotyped image of interrogation and antiseptic.'¹⁰⁹ Allan suggests this marked a divergence from the Peckham health centre's emphasis on clinical observation, yet in fact this was a point of conjunction between the two centres. Both centres wanted to recreate the informality of a 'club' atmosphere and to play down expert control.

This unceremonious approach was, however, combined with a didactic element. As noted above, this had always been a feature of the mother and child welfare centres of the early twentieth century.¹¹⁰ In the case of the Finsbury Health Centre, the building itself entered into this instructional relationship. Murals by Gordon Cullen exhorted visitors to spend time outdoors and carried slogans such as 'Chest Diseases are Preventable and Curable'.¹¹¹ By turning the venue into a 'sort of teaching vehicle', Allen argues, Lubetkin was echoing the Constructivist ideal of the building as a 'social condenser'.¹¹² As clinic, club and conveyer of knowledge the centre did indeed go beyond the rather authoritarian approach of the earlier mother and child clinics. Participatory involvement rather than one-way instruction seems to have been the intention. A similar awareness of the importance of an interactive relationship between the providers and recipients of health care is evident in Bermondsey Borough Council's experiments in health care provision and publicity. As early as 1924, for example, the Public Health

¹⁰⁸ Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 334.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood'.

¹¹¹ Allen, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 335.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 334. The Russian Constructivist movement flourished at the time of the revolution. Their intention was to involve architecture in the integration of society. In many ways this echoes the motivations of the English vernacular architecture and design associated with William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement. See chapter 2, pages 62-3, 67-9.

Committee of Bermondsey Borough Council asserted the need to move beyond a conception of preventive medicine characterised by the making of laws and regulations believing such direction to be of limited value without the 'intelligent co-operation on the part of the individuals in the community....'¹¹³

The Finsbury Health Centre was intended to be part of a larger social initiative. Statements in the press referred to the 'Finsbury Plan', presumably a strategy of regeneration and development of the social infrastructure of the borough.¹¹⁴ Council minutes do not refer to a plan in any specific sense. However, official evidence does indicate that the health centre was approved in the context of possible housing development. The majority of the Council saw the health centre as the 'first step' in an ongoing process.¹¹⁵ Certainly, by the time the health centre was opened in autumn 1938, Lubetkin and the Tecton firm had been re-engaged on housing commissions at Busaco Street and Sadler Street.¹¹⁶ The Finsbury Plan, as far as it existed in any defined sense at all, seems to have a product of informal discussions between Riley, Katial and Lubetkin. The Centre itself was intended to sit within an enlarged area of public gardens: this was, in fact, substantially achieved. Other elements were to be new housing schemes on slum-cleared sites, incorporating community centres, laundries and various other tenants' facilities. The specific impetus was the emergent programme of civil defence, through air-raid shelters, but 'Tecton's remit was broadened to include virtually all aspects of social and physical planning throughout the Borough.'¹¹⁷ The details of this

¹¹³ Lebas, 'The Film Work of Bermondsey Council', 49. Bermondsey's use of public relations in the field of health education is particularly interesting. For a wider discussion of Labour's interest in public relations and its implications for citizenship see below, chapter 7.

¹¹⁴ See for example, *Architectural Review*, January 1938, 5-6; 'Finsbury Acts', *Architect and Building News*, 21 October 1938, 58. The programme seems to have covered six areas, housing, open spaces, child welfare services, bath and public wash-houses, air raid precautions and health services. See above, page 68.

¹¹⁵ Finsbury Borough Council, *Official Minutes*, Council meeting, 5 March 1936.

¹¹⁶ Finsbury Borough Council, *Official Minutes*, Housing Committee, 5 April 1937, 13 January 1938, 24 November 1938.

¹¹⁷ Allen, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 349.

'plan' are not clear. Allan's conclusion, that the title 'Finsbury Plan' was most likely to be a codename used privately by Lubetkin and Riley for their longer term intentions, seems a valid one ⁸

The developments at Finsbury in the 1930s are an example of contemporary interest in the idea of physical determinism.¹¹⁹ The health centre, and the wider schemes for housing and other environmental improvement were conceived within an ideological framework which stressed the importance of extraneous influences on the human social life. The contemporary preoccupation with the therapeutic properties of light and air is evident. Lubetkin justified the use of glass bricks 'not only from the point of view of hygiene but also as a medium of propaganda of light and air in the homes of the patients, and as a powerfully stimulating psychological factor.'¹²⁰ The causal connection between environment and society found an effective symbol in the health centre. A phoenix risen from the rubble of the slums, the health centre was a powerful image of progress. It was utilized by Abram Games in his series of wartime posters, 'Your Britain - Fight for it now!', which depicted alternate visions of society before and after the war in the areas of health, housing and education. A controversial poster, it contrasted the image of a rickety slum child with the pristine facade of the Finsbury Health Centre.¹²¹ (Figure 4).

The experimental health centre set up by George Scott Williamson and Innes Pearse to test their ideas on the nature of health and the conditions necessary for its maintenance attracted considerable attention during the short and uncertain period of its

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 370. Certainly this conclusion would fit with what is known of Riley. He was undoubtedly an extremely dominant political figure. Eventually this led him into difficulties with the party and the Council.

¹¹⁹ See above, chapter 2 for the comparable influence of ideas of physical determinism on town planning. Also, a similar impetus lies behind the work of the Dr Alfred Salter and the Public Health Committee at Bermondsey and with the borough's inner city regeneration and beautification programme. See Brockway, *Bermondsey Story*.

¹²⁰ Finsbury Borough Council, *Official Minutes*, Public Health Committee, 19 May 1936.

¹²¹ Allen notes that Churchill condemned the poster as 'a disgraceful libel on the conditions prevailing in Great Britain before the war...' All distributed copies were recalled and destroyed, though Games saved a few that had not been distributed. Allen, *Berthold Lubetkin*, 442.

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Figure 4 'Your Britain - Fight for it Now!', A.B C.A. poster of the Finsbury Health Centre, by Abram Games

existence. The Centre, open between 1926 and 1930, 1935-1939 (in new premises specially designed for the purpose), and 1945-50, was an unusual mixture of health centre and family club, the two facets designed to complement the health development of the members.

A fundamental feature of the Peckham experiment was the demand that the members be left to interact freely and spontaneously with the environment provided by the Centre. Williamson attached much importance to the concept of self-responsibility of action:

Health demands that a man shoulder his own burden. It is better that he receive a whole wage and himself take responsibility for his own welfare than he be given what is presumed to be good for him and robbed of responsibility. The one spells health, the other atrophy and degeneration.¹²²

This idea of responsible action echoes much of the social reform rhetoric of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. Indeed, A.D.Lindsay, Master of Balliol College and author of the preface of the first published report of the Centre, identified the Centre's aims as 'social self-maintenance' and compared the Centre's ideals to those of the late nineteenth century settlement movement.¹²³ Williamson and Pearse's principles, found ample expression in the organisation of the Centre. From the outset Williamson and Pearse tried to ensure that the decision to join the Centre was freely taken by prospective members. The neighbourhood within half a mile of the Centre was circularized, but no other incentives to join were offered.¹²⁴

¹²² G.S. Williamson and I.H. Pearse, *Biologists in search of material: an interim report of the work of the Pioneer Health Centre, Peckham*, (1938), 130. See also a letter from the Centre to the Mayor of Camberwell. PRO MH52/159/718/1037/1. Camberwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Pioneer Health Centre, Peckham, 1933-37. Williamson's stress upon the 'whole wage' in some ways echoes J.A.Hobson's belief that a 'living wage' lay at the foundation of less exploitative economic and social organisation. See Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians', 211.

¹²³ Pioneer Health Centre, *First Annual Report*, (1926). A review of Pearse and Williamson's book *A Case for Action*, in the *British Medical Journal*, 28 February 1931, 357-8, makes a similar point. Many of the same influences affected other groups urging social reintegration, for example the NCSS's Community Association movement.

¹²⁴ However, the membership was selected in a broad sense. The first annual report of the Centre in 1926 noted that Peckham was chosen as a suitable site for the Centre because it had a relatively homogeneous and 'moderately good artisan population' which, they

The Peckham Centre was designed to become self-supporting on the achievement of full membership, on the basis of weekly subscriptions from the members. The amount charged was noted to be well within the 'capacity and acceptance' of the wage-earners catered for.¹²⁵ The founders emphasised the beneficial effects of this system. Not only did it contribute to the 'inculcation of responsibility' it was a means of giving power to the members: '...The staff, including the doctors, will then be the paid servants of the members, with no intervening loyalties to undermine mutual confidence.'¹²⁶

Indeed, in their public reports Pearse and Williamson stressed the minimal role accorded to general staff at the centre. The principle of self-service in the family club activities was fundamental to the general organisation of the Centre:

A healthy individual does not like to be waited on; he prefers the freedom of independent action which accompanies circumstances so arranged that he can do for himself what he wants to do as and when he wants to do it...Self-service has the merit of engendering responsibility and of enhancing awareness as well as of increasing freedom of action. As unhampered in the Centre as in their own houses, the members are free to improvise to suit all occasions as they arise...each new family emboldened to strike out for itself in this living social medium can add its own quota of 'organisation' to the Centre -the outstanding characteristic of which is the abiding fluidity of its constitution, permitting continuous growth and the functional evolution of its society from day to day and year to year.¹²⁷

In practice this meant no attendants, no waitresses, stackable furniture and accessible equipment. The role of the small band of staff was 'to be used by the members as a means of reaching and sustaining their own maximum health.' In summarizing four years of the Peckham experiment, Pearse and Crocker concluded,

...there is little to distinguish members from staff in the social interplay of

argued, was likely to be 'capable of benefitting from educational work.' The Peckham founders, it ought to be remembered, deliberately avoided the poor and the social-problem group.

¹²⁵ The figure varied, starting at 6 pence per family and rising to 2 shillings after the war. I. Pearse and L. Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment, A Study of the Living Structure of Society*, (1943), 73-74.

²⁶ Pioneer Health Centre, *First Annual Report*, (1926), 4; Pioneer Health Centre, Peckham, *Annual Report*, (1936), 4.

¹²⁷ Pearse and Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment*, 74-5.

the Centre. The whole medium is social - Science socialised. The Centre has, in fact, shown itself to be a potent mechanism for the 'democratisation' of knowledge and of action.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, Jane Lewis and Barbara Brookes are right to question how far the actual Peckham regime corresponded to the outward face presented by Williamson and Pearse.¹²⁹ Peckham's novelty was enhanced by the language chosen by its founders in their reports and publicity. The 'democratisation of knowledge', is a pertinent example: in practice, in the consulting rooms of Pearse and Williamson this was probably indistinguishable from 'guidance' or 'influence'. Indeed, many who observed the work of the Centre first-hand attest to the dominant personality of Williamson: to Dr.K.E.Barlow, he was the 'ring-master', to Frances Donaldson, he was a 'dictator'.¹³⁰ However, most people only saw the outward face of the Centre. As a pioneer health centre the Peckham experiment occasioned much discussion in both the medical and the general press and among politicians and administrators. To Ernest Barker of the NCSS, the Peckham Centre represented an example of the link he sought between active citizenship, community-feeling and health. Like many of his contemporary social commentators, Barker urged upon society the pursuit of 'national fitness' and questioned the proper auspices for this collective effort:

Not, I should hope, in State-organised institutes or camps. Far better...would be a system under which a natural local community sought to make the best of itself and its members by including fitness among its aims and objects...The Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham is teaching a lesson which deserves general application.¹³¹

The local, self-propelled responsibility for healthy living and fitness which Peckham typified, was, to Barker, an expression of a vital kind of citizenship.

The Pioneer Centre struggled to balance its books throughout its short lifetime. Grants from the Halley Stewart Trust and member subscriptions proved insufficient to meet its costs. The problem finally came to a head in 1950. Appeals were made to the

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

¹²⁹ J. Lewis and B. Brookes, 'A reassessment of the work of the Peckham Centre, 1936-51', *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 61, 2, (1983), 323.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 323.

¹³¹ E. Barker, 'Community Centres and Circles', *The Fortnightly*, March, (1933), 266.

London County Council to find a niche for the Pioneer Centre in the National Health Service. But this was a different age from that of Peckham's heyday of 1935. Massive stumbling blocks stood in the way.¹³² LCC aid was dependent on major alterations to the Peckham system including abandonment of the catchment area and member subscription. The 1946 commitment to the idea of universality in health care provision meant that it would have to be free and open to the whole borough.¹³³ According to the Directors' Report the collapse of negotiations occurred because the Centre 'was deemed to be contrary to the policy' of the Ministry of Health.¹³⁴ Yet the philosophy of Peckham had clearly attracted many sympathizers and the threat of Peckham's closure occasioned much press comment.¹³⁵ A great deal of emphasis in the popular press was placed on Peckham's independent constitution. The *Evening Standard*, reporting on the negotiations with the LCC noted:

...help obtained from official sources involves the risk that the centre will lose the essential character that gives it great value. It has been administered, to date, under the democratic control of the families who use it and under the leadership of individuals fired with an ideal. Inside the NHS a living thing, unique in its way, would tend inescapably to deteriorate into an institution, indistinguishable in spirit or purpose from other official institutions.¹³⁶

The Peckham Centre's other main feature was its role as a family social centre and its aim to aid the integration of local society. In this respect, the centre shared the ideals of the Finsbury planners. In the case of Peckham, the aim of social assimilation

¹³² Not least was Williamson himself; stressing the centrality of the research work of the Centre he insisted that its continuance was crucial to any deal. The LCC, however, was not empowered to provide for this work. Between them red tape and stubbornness made any attempt at a satisfactory deal unlikely.

¹³³ The reasons for the refusal of LCC aid are given in the Directors' Report. The contents of the report received strong press coverage, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* both covered the issue in great detail.

¹³⁴ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/7, 'The End of an Experiment - Directors give Reasons for Closing of Peckham Health Centre', *Manchester Guardian*, 31 July 1951.

¹³⁵ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/7. Press extracts collected by the LCC are from numerous newspapers, national and the London locals and also local newspapers from all over the country.

¹³⁶ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/7/, *Evening Standard*, 3 March 1950.

was overtly and publicly stated. Williamson and Pearse repeatedly stressed this aspect of the experiment in their scientific literature and in the Centre's publicity:

The whole building is in fact characterised by a design which invites social contact...It is a field for acquaintanceship and for the development of friendships...In these times of disintegrated social and family life in our villages, towns, and still worse in cities, there is no longer any place like this...The Centre is just such a place...an open forum...an arena for the unfolding of the consecutive and integrated leisure activity of families.¹³⁷

Williamson and Pearse's views, characteristically set within a biological discourse, are consistent with many contemporary responses to 'such interwar social anxieties as urban dissociation, family instability, and the declining birth rate.'¹³⁸ A bulwark against 'social malnutrition', the Centre was to provide urban families with much needed companionship and the opportunity 'to cultivate their faculties within a community.'¹³⁹ The founders publicized the Peckham Centre as a model for social planners. 'It is...a major function of statesmanship to see that there is social opportunity. A nation seeking health cannot leave that to football promoters, dog racers, and the brewers as we do now.'¹⁴⁰ The Peckham Centre was an alternative. On the Centre's closure popular press commentaries stressed this aspect of its work, and the 'comradeship' of the Centre was confirmed by many former members.¹⁴¹ Headed by a Mrs Purser and a Mr Rodwell, ex-members

¹³⁷ Pearse and Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment*, 69.

¹³⁸ Lewis and Brookes, 'A Reassessment of the work of the Peckham Health Centre', 309. A similar theme was explored in a 'Target for Tomorrow' pamphlet on health, *The Nation's Health* (1944), which included among its problems of health, 'social integration'. This was illustrated by pictures and quotations from the Peckham Health Centre's published reports.

¹³⁹ Pioneer Health Centre, *Annual Report*, (1937), 7.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/7. *Daily Express*, 6 March 1950; *The People*, 5 March 1950. However, the *South London Observer*, while agreeing that the disbandment of the Community Centre was a great loss to the local area, sounded a rather different note, drawing attention to the at times awkward relationship between Williamson and Pearse and the local community: '...the officials have sometimes shown such unwillingness for local publicity as to suggest that the work was far too important to be treated as a local matter...If the centre had kept a little more closely in touch with local life - apart from its inevitable association with the 'guinea pig' members - there might have been more local concern when the warning was issued that it might have to close', 17 March 1950.

formed themselves into an Association and launched a 'fighting fund appeal' in an attempt to continue the family club activities.¹⁴² In an example of active citizenship and communal effort, Parliament and the Lord President of the Council were petitioned with these aims.¹⁴³ The Peckham Centre did not survive in its original form but its particular contribution to the promotion of health and community feeling was recognised by many contemporaries as the numerous press comments on the centre in its final days and after its closure testify. The Peckham approach was highly participatory. It was, significantly, this element that contemporaries most welcomed.

Both health centres, though operating within extremely different circumstances, offer information on the relationship between health and the idea of citizenship. The presence of an environmental determinism was an important feature and in line with the general ideas on 'positive health' and the evolution of the discipline of social medicine. The move away from a narrow, biologically-determined conception of health and the adoption of the idea of unfulfilled potentiality, are clearly expressed in the two health centres. However, both centres also have implications for a more active conception of citizenship rooted in an organic connection between the individual and the locality. This is most avowedly expressed in Scott Williamson's descriptions of the centre at Peckham, but the social plan for Finsbury of Lubetkin, Riley and Katial also contains a participatory element, albeit a more collective expression of participation, mediated through the democratically-elected borough council. Their Finsbury Plan was to be a concrete statement of 'civic valour', an exercise in the rebuilding of a community. The health centre was only the central statement of a plan that was intended to involve the whole community.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/7, *Kentish Mercury*, 10 March 1950.

¹⁴³ GLRO: LCC/PH/PHS/1/7. *Manchester Guardian*, 31 July 1951.

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, the contract for the building of the health centre stipulated that at least 90% of the unskilled labour was drawn from Finsbury residents. From March 1938 onwards 100% of the unskilled labour was from Finsbury. FBC, *Official Minutes*, Public Health Committee, 15 February 1938, 22 March 1938. A very similar attitude is evidenced at Bermondsey. See Lebas, 'The Film Work of Bermondsey Council', 60.

In the 1930s and 1940s the questions of positive health and social medicine were explicitly linked to plans for the reformation of the national health services.¹⁴⁵ The relationship between medicine and the community was a key part of this concern: the need for a new kind of doctor and a more communally based approach to medicine ‘to meet the demands of the community today’ became a familiar refrain.¹⁴⁶ Although there was general agreement to a degree, the debate also re-opened a number of contentious issues, not least of which was the question of the location and the execution of responsibility for the community’s health.¹⁴⁷ The health policy documents of the Labour party, for instance, continued to stress the importance of replacing the private services of the general practitioner with a salaried medical service. This tenet of a new national health service, the party argued, would equalise provision and provide part of the mechanism of public accountability:

A medical service provided by the community and paid for to a large extent out of public funds, ought to be controlled and directed by public representatives. A doctor in such a service must have a responsibility to the nation and must understand it. He must be something more than a tradesman whose sole duty it is to please his customers, and whose practice and remuneration depend almost entirely on the way in which he succeeds in this.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, PEP, *Report on the British Health Services; Committee on Scottish Health Services, (Cathcart) Report*, Cmd. 5204, (1936); PRO: MH 80/24, Minutes of Office Conferences, 7 February and 6 April, 1938. Webster also notes that the renewed, if still rather subdued, Ministry of Health activity during the later 1930s also stemmed from the perceived need to respond to the Labour Party’s pensions and health policies which were likely to become election issues in the near future, ‘Conflict and Consensus’, 144, 145.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, R.H. Crowley, Senior Medical Officer at the Board of Education, ‘Preventive and clinical medicine in relation to the medical care and treatment of children.’ *BMJ*, 12 November 1932, 875-8; leading article ‘The Scottish health services report’, *BMJ* 4 July 1936, 27-8; Sir E. Farquhar Buzzard, BMA 140th Annual Meeting, President’s Address, ‘And the Future’, *BMJ*, 25 July 1936, 163-6; Sir H. Dale, ‘The Future of Medicine’, *BMJ* 22 October 1938, 850-1; R.E. Lane, ‘Medicine in industry’, *BMJ*, 19 October 1940, 531-3; J.A.Ryle, ‘Today and Tomorrow’, *BMJ*, 16 November 1940, 657-9.

¹⁴⁷ This matter will be explored in a more general context in Part II.

¹⁴⁸ LPA: RDR/154, Public Health Sub-Committee, ‘Labour’s Plan for Health’, December 1942, 3; RDR/49, Public Health Sub-Committee, ‘First Steps Towards a State Medical

This concern for accountability was also reflected in the party's wariness of extending health provision through the approved societies of the National Health Insurance scheme which, the party argued, were undemocratically controlled and thus unaccountable to their consumers.¹⁴⁹

Reconstruction plans intensified and focused the health debate. The Beveridge Report and the National Health Service proposals, in particular, are important benchmarks in an analysis of the idea of citizenship: both were highly public displays of the increasing importance attached to the subject of the people's health, and both raised the now unavoidable questions of how such a commitment was to be delivered.¹⁵⁰

The Beveridge Report was a powerful document. Its evocative language was central to its impact. In her biography of Beveridge, Jose Harris, notes the influence of Beveridge's old friend and new wife, Jessie Mair, on the discourse of the Report, urging him to 'imbue his proposals with "a Cromwellian spirit" and messianic tone.'¹⁵¹ Health figured strongly, Assumption B of the report was the clearest statement to date that the provision of health services was to be based on the citizen's right to receive the treatment and care he or she needed.¹⁵² Provision was to be universal and comprehensive.¹⁵³ It was a clear and powerful endorsement of the 'passive mode' of citizenship, of 'the citizenship

Service', December 1941.

¹⁴⁹ *The Labour Party: Report of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Conference, 1925* (1925), 289-90; *Report of the Royal Commission on National Health Insurance*, Cmd. 2596, (1926), xiv, 299-304, 306-7, (minority report); Dauntton, 'Payment and Participation', 183, 203-5. The party turned, instead, to the local authorities.

¹⁵⁰ Hennessy has rightly pointed out that the Health Service White Paper was 'markedly less impressive' in its all-important 'institutional and financial arrangements' than the 'declaratory phrases of the pieces of paper' themselves. These paper pronouncements, however, are significant as political statements of intent and as such are a crucial component of the mosaic which is the idea of citizenship. See P.Hennessy, *Never Again*, (1992), 134.

¹⁵¹ J.Harris, *William Beveridge, A Biography*, (Oxford, 1977), 386-7.

¹⁵² Beveridge Report, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, (1942), Cmd. 6404, Part 6, 158-9; See also, for example, *The Lancet*, 12 December 1942, 699.

¹⁵³ PRO: CAB/66/34, War Cabinet Memoranda. The War Cabinet approved the basic assumption in February 1943.

of equal entitlement.’¹⁵⁴

The universal principle was re-affirmed in the proposals for a National Health Service. The independent research group PEP welcomed the 1944 Health White Paper in the context of a changing attitude towards the provision of welfare services. The 1911 National Insurance scheme had produced ‘poor man’s doctoring’ and this was no longer acceptable.¹⁵⁵ The medical profession had now lost the argument that free medical care should be available only to those ‘who need it’, ‘need’ being defined as financial inability to pay fees and determined by an income limit which would have left about 10% of the people outside the service.¹⁵⁶ PEP heralded the victory of universality of care: this was ‘the main pillar of the Government’s plan, and both public opinion and Parliament have welcomed it almost without dissent’.¹⁵⁷ To Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health in the 1945 Labour Government, this universalist principle represented more than progressive administration, it would penetrate, and elevate, the psyche of a nation:

Society becomes more wholesome, more serene, and spiritually healthier, if it knows that its citizens have at the back of their consciousness the knowledge that not only themselves, but all their fellows, have access, when ill, to the best that medical skill can provide.¹⁵⁸

However, other layers of citizenship than the universal principle were also implicated in the reconstruction health proposals. John Ryle noted that the Beveridgian system had overt implications for active, participatory citizenship:

...social security must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual....The report proclaims, on the one hand, the right of every citizen to certain things....But it proclaims with equal force that every citizen has duties as well as rights. By this scheme all will contribute to the health services for all. The healthy will contribute to the unfortunates

¹⁵⁴ Ignatieff, ‘Citizenship and Moral Narcissism’, 63-74.

¹⁵⁵ The idea of state provision as only for the ‘necessitous poor’, PEP argued, had given way ‘to today’s idea that services provided by the community should meet the needs of all its members.’ PEP, ‘Medical Care for Citizens’, 2.

¹⁵⁶ Report of the Council of the BMA to the Representative Body, *BMJ*, 13 May 1944.

¹⁵⁷ PEP, ‘Medical Care for Citizens’, 6.

¹⁵⁸ Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, (1952), 75. See also the comments of Richard Titmuss on the social and cultural value of universalism and, conversely, of the damage wrought by the stigma of selective means testing. See Deacon, ‘The Dilemmas of Welfare’, 198.

incapacitated by disease or injury....We shall all be much more actively a part of one great family, pulling together for the common good. We shall not be beholden to the State (except for organisation and administration of it all) for we shall be the State, State insurance and State security will in fact mean Our insurance and Our security...let us think of this great plan as our plan.¹⁵⁹

The White Paper, too, explicitly linked duties with rights and forcefully interposed the notion of accountability into this context, asserting that 'If people are to have a right to look to a public service for all their medical needs it must be somebody's duty to see that they do not look in vain'. That duty, it argued, must be placed upon 'an organisation answerable to the public in the democratic way, while enjoying the fullest expert and professional guidance'.¹⁶⁰ PEP concurred with this analysis arguing that 'in so vital a public service, which men, women, and children daily expect to save them from death, the consumer's supremacy...cannot be challenged.'¹⁶¹ Here we arrive at something quite different from the ostensibly Fabian conception of a state medical service managed by experts which, it might be argued lay at the base of moves for a national health service.¹⁶² PEP, indeed, suggested that the alternatives offered were technocracy and democracy. In 1944, democracy was the nominal victor: 'no solution is to be found by reverting to the technocratic ideas of the early Utilitarians.'¹⁶³

The practical expression of citizenship and democracy, however, required attention

¹⁵⁹ Ryle Papers, 66/2, Wellcome Unit Oxford. See Beveridge Report, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, Part 1, 6-7; Part 6, 170.

¹⁶⁰ White Paper, 'A National Health Service' (1944), quoted in PEP, 'Medical Care for Citizens', 8. PEP cites Sir Arthur Newsholme as providing a precedent: 'The giving of official grants of money must carry with it a corresponding control by the representatives of the tax and rate-payers...Skilled medical work cannot be controlled by laymen, but in all business arrangements the representative lay power must be supreme.'

¹⁶¹ PEP often uses the word 'consumer' in this context. It is used, it seems, to indicate the 'power' the recipient of the services ought to have. In many respects it carries the same connotations as 'citizen', which appears in the title of the report.

¹⁶² The creation of a comprehensive 'State Medical Service' from existing public health services was an important priority of the Webbs and the Fabians. This policy was advocated in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1909 and reiterated in the Webbs's *The State and the Doctor*, (1910).

¹⁶³ PEP, 'Medical Care for Citizens', 13-14.

to the details of administration. Hospital policy, in particular, is revealing of the complications which arose in attempts to translate statements into action. The wartime period witnessed a major re-evaluation of the future of hospital services. The voluntary hospitals, particularly those in the capital, were by the end of the 1930s 'drifting into such a profound economic crisis that their viability was threatened, and the prospect of local authority takeover seemed imminent'.¹⁶⁴ The war intensified the need for official attention: while removing the immediate financial worries of the voluntary hospitals the wartime Emergency Medical Service demonstrated both the benefits of an integrated hospital service and, more worryingly, the difficulties of reaching agreement between the various interested parties for a peacetime replacement.¹⁶⁵ Discussions at ministry level indicate that officials were conscious that their proposals for hospital administration held implications for the question of citizenship. In particular, the issue of the location of responsibility was recurrent. A note by Mr Wrigley, a Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Health and a member of the official committee on post-war hospital policy, is revealing of this contextualisation. Whatever unit of administration was adopted for delivery of health care services, Wrigley argued, the machinery 'should be such as to secure or preserve a wide popular interest in the running of these services.' Indeed, he continued that, in his view, it was

more important that the general body of the people should be interested in these services, and should themselves be made responsible for the manner in which they are governed and in which these services are provided, than they should be provided from above with a mechanistically perfect organisation for which they have no responsibility and in which they can take no interest.¹⁶⁶

However, it was the precisely the means of achieving this interest that proved contentious. The debate centred around the question of control.¹⁶⁷ Issues of local interest and community responsibility, the desirability of democratic control and the elective

¹⁶⁴ Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus', 144.

¹⁶⁵ Webster, *The Health Services since the War*, 22-4, 32-4; F.K.Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London. The King's Fund, 1897-1990*, (Oxford, 1992), 145.

¹⁶⁶ PRO: MH77/25, Wrigley, 'Hospital Policy and Regionalisation', 25 September 1941.

¹⁶⁷ Many of the themes which had divided the various interested parties in the 1920s and 1930s resurfaced, for example, the debate over regional or local authority administration.

principle as against expert management pervaded discussions: the contested nature of the concept of citizenship and the tension between different facets of the concept were laid bare. For example, the 1944 National Health Service White Paper characterised the hospital proposals, with their mix of central government control and local government responsibility, as embodying democracy.¹⁶⁸ However, opinion was strongly divided on this subject implying significant differences in interpretations of the concepts of democracy and citizenship themselves. Within the Ministry, community responsibility was seen in terms of adherence to the elective principle and its concomitant, public accountability.¹⁶⁹ The Labour party, too, had long taken a similar view, arguing throughout the interwar and wartime years for an extension of health care provision through the municipalities.¹⁷⁰ However, to many others, democratic control was not reducible to either local government or ministerial responsibility. The voluntary hospital movement was regarded by many, including the former Labour Lord Chancellor, Sankey, as the repository of local initiative and responsibility.¹⁷¹ In conjunction with their traditional emphases on local decision-making, innovation, and self-help, the voluntary hospitals saw themselves as 'promoting democratic pluralism in health' in a manner

¹⁶⁸ *A National Health Service*, Cmd, 6502, 14. The balance between central and local government control and administration remained a highly problematic issue, penetrating debates up to Cabinet level. Certainly the powerful municipal rhetoric, in evidence in the public health policies of the London boroughs of Finsbury and Bermondsey, was challenged by Bevan's vision of national uniformity. See below chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of this question.

¹⁶⁹ PRO: MH77/28, National Health Service White Paper, Preparation and Issue, 1943-44, 18. The importance of this combination of central government control with local government responsibility for the maintenance of Treasury control was a factor in the entrenchment of this view in Whitehall.

¹⁷⁰ LPA: RDR/16, Public Health Sub-Committee: Somerville Hastings, 'A Scheme for a State Medical Service', November 1941; RDR/154, Public Health Sub-Committee: 'Labour's Plan for Health', December 1942.

¹⁷¹ Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, 127. The SMA's Somerville Hastings, himself noted that the voluntary hospitals were held in fond and high regard by many in the Labour movement, LPA: RDR/37, Public Health Sub-Committee, 'Hospital Development after the War'. For a more detailed discussion of this point and the contrasting views of Aneurin Bevan see below, chapter 6.

which surpassed the 'remote control' methods of state provision.¹⁷² Assimilation of these different conceptions of citizenship was not going to be an easy process. It penetrated into the very core of structures of social administration, raising the contentious matter of how and where control and accountability was to be expressed.⁷³ The nature of the relationship between state and civil society was at issue. The matter remained unresolved at the end of the war and the incoming Labour government was itself divided over the best way to proceed.¹⁷⁴ The context and implications of these differences of opinion, set within a wider analysis of how ideas of citizenship shaped critiques of the relationship between central government and local government, voluntary groups and the individual, will be explored in the following chapters.

¹⁷² Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, 151-155.

¹⁷³ For example, see the debates over regionalisation of health services discussed in Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus', Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 206-7 and below chapter 4, 151-2.

¹⁷⁴ Bevan, for example, departed from the party's municipally-based health policy, which continued to be defended by Morrison. See below, chapters 4 and 6.

Part II:
PLANNING FOR PARTICIPATION

PLANNING FOR PARTICIPATION

The notion of citizenship, in particular a social citizenship to complement formal political citizenship in Britain was, by the interwar and wartime period, a significant part of social policy debate. How did those of the left and centre-left envisage its development and augmentation? What would be its nursery and its structural supports? The second part of this study addresses these questions by focusing on contemporary discussion of the relationship between the citizen, the central state and local government. In particular, it explores the interest, present in the Labour movement throughout the period, in forging a participatory citizenship and democracy through the local ballot box and the local community. During the interwar years, and even more strongly during the Second World War and under the pressures of reconstruction, socialist intellectuals and politicians expressed considerable concern at the effects of centralised planning on local government and the implications of these for citizenship. The key problem for the party was finding the means to fuse its desires for a nationally beneficial economic plan and a national standard of service with local diversity and initiative.

This part explores these issues, first by examining the critiques of local government that surfaced in the party and among its sympathisers and by considering their proposals for reform in the light of the concepts of citizenship and community. Then, to complement this exploration of ideas, chapter 5 will examine, in more detail, contemporary discussions of the relationship between the central and the local state and the citizen. The focus of this chapter will be land and town planning policy. This area of social and economic policy has received less historical study than many others yet it is extremely pertinent to the issues explored in this part. Town and country planning policies were frequently used by contemporaries to illustrate the necessity of reworking the fabric of local government structure and finance. In addition, this area of policy-making raised major questions about the nature of the state's claim on the nation's resources, and about how such claims could be executed within a democratic and accountable framework. Thus, through the perspective of town planning policy the Labour party's view of the overarching issue of the nature of the boundaries between state and society and thus of the nature of citizenship in a social democratic state will be explored.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THE INDISPENSABLE PARTNER

Local government had been extremely important to the Labour party in its early years. As a small party, with local ties and motivations, it achieved its first successes in the context of local government.¹ An important offshoot from this early success was the key role given to local politics by the party. The 'proliferating range of local elections' which occurred during the period of Labour's birth and infancy, encouraged the development of tighter organisation and enabled the young party 'to build up and exercise [its] party machinery'². In addition, a burgeoning political interest in social welfare provision in this period gave radicals and progressives every reason to engage in local government activity, the customary site of statutory social services. As Pat Thane has argued, local government '...was one of the paths whereby social reform became central to the politics of the quarter century before 1914 and brought a qualitative change to it'.³ Local government, moreover, was recognised as a more democratic and accessible arena than national government and much attention was paid to ways of making it more so.⁴

¹ See J.R. MacDonald, *Socialism and Society*, (1907), 161; Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics: Radicalism, Democracy and Social Reform, 1880-1914', in Biagini and Reid (ed.), *Currents of Radicalism*; J.R MacDonald, *Parliament and Democracy*, (1920), 69-70; J.R. MacDonald, *Socialism: Critical and Constructive*, (1921), 245-48; J. Davis, *Reforming London. The London Government Problem, 1855-1900*, (Oxford, 1988); J. Davis, 'Radical Clubs and London Politics, 1870-1900', in Feldman and Stedman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis - London*; K. Laybourn and J. Reynolds, *Liberalism and the Rise of Labour, 1890-1918*, (1984), 65, 109, 149; D. Tanner, 'Elections, Statistics, and the Rise of the Labour Party, 1906-1931', *Historical Journal*, 34, (1991), 893-908. Labour's successes in local elections, though, were extremely variable across the country.

² Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics', 244. Local elections included those for town councils, county councils from 1889, vestries, boards of poor law guardians, school boards (until 1904), parish, urban district and rural district councils from 1894, London boroughs from 1900. Unsurprisingly, local elections also occurred with great frequency.

³ Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics'. See also, P.F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism*, (Cambridge, 1971); H.V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics, 1892-1914*, (Cambridge, 1973).

⁴ Thane, 'Labour and Local Politics', 245, 260. Women, unentitled to participate in the national arena were able and willing to engage in local political activity and service, 259-60. See also P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect. Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914*,

It is usually argued, however, that Labour abandoned its interest in local government once it had accepted the strategy of central planning in the 1930s. John Rowett's doctoral thesis, still largely unchallenged, argues that by the 1930s the party's commitment to socialism through national planning led to a decreasing scope for local government.⁵ Indicators of this increasing detachment from local government, Rowett argues, are multifarious in the interwar period. Direction increasingly came from the central party organisation, headed from 1917 by 'the political entrepreneur' Arthur Henderson who regarded Labour's involvement in local government merely as a means to achieving national power.⁶ The Enabling Bill, which had become the keystone in an expansion of municipal initiative for many in the Labour Party, was emasculated as the tensions between provincial Labour figures and the increasingly metropolitan-orientated leadership intensified.⁷ In addition, the fundamental issue of reform of local government finance was surpassed by an increasing insistence on central funding of services. Moreover, it has become a commonplace to argue that the legacy of municipal socialism was not conducive to the idea of active democracy; that it was, indeed, inhibited by the

(Oxford, 1987). The situation, however, was somewhat changed following the opening up of the parliamentary franchise in 1928: whereas in parliamentary elections from this date all registered adults aged 21 or over had the vote, the vote in local elections was restricted to ratepayers and their spouses.

⁵ J.S. Rowett, 'The Labour Party and Local Government'.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 29-30, 51-5.

⁷ The emergence of labour representatives on local authorities in the early 1900s had invested the issue of municipal trading with an 'ideological colouring' which remained strong into the interwar years. This was channelled through pressure for an enabling bill which would greatly widen both the scope of local authority action, and more importantly, its autonomy of action. The Enabling Bill proposed to replace the system of granting to local authorities specific powers for particular purposes with 'a system of general powers, subject in certain matters, to specific central regulation and control'. Proponents of the bill defended their stance on the basis that local authorities, being particularly well placed to know the will of the locality, should be allowed to define and execute that will. Municipalisation of the distributive trades, especially milk, bread and coal, was the particular aim. See, LPA: Local Government Advisory Committee Minutes, 26 May 1921, memorandum JSM/LG/66 i; *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, 16 May 1919, vol. 115, col. 1972. See also Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government' 222, and 303 and Appendix 1, 360-6 for the text of the Local Authorities Enabling Bill.

Fabian vision of expertly managed, efficient administration.⁸ This understanding of Labour's attitude to local government, however, is in need of re-evaluation. In particular, it is necessary to examine to what extent ideology was pulling Labour into a definite statement of centralisation. The local-central relationship certainly aroused interest within Labour circles, yet the impression of a consistent and ideologically-driven movement towards centralisation is misleading: finding a means to fuse the requirements of equality, as manifested in its desire for a nationally beneficial economic plan or a national standard of service, with local diversity, initiative and, indeed, participation was a problem keenly felt by key members of the Labour party between the 1930s and the Attlee years. This chapter explores the debates which occurred within and around Labour circles, and suggests that a false, or at least a misleadingly rigid, dichotomy has been fostered in analyses of the Labour party's attitude to local government. This might be characterised as a dichotomy between ideas of planning and notions of participation. It is indisputable, however, that by 1951 many of the principal services of local government had been lost to central administration, and reasons for this notable change, if the explanation of ideological antipathy towards local autonomy is discounted or reduced, still need to be uncovered. The relationship between central and local government is generally explored as a dualistic one. Yet, as John Davis suggests, the reality is much more complex, with divisions within both central and local government playing a large part in defining the relationship between the centre and the locality.⁹ Awareness of these internal divisions and, in particular, their impact upon strategies for local government reform, are central to a thorough understanding of contemporary attitudes and responses to the local government-central government relationship.

Before examining in detail the contemporary debate on the position and role of local government in a modern democratic community, it is first necessary to question the conventional chronology used in examinations of the Labour party's policies and attitudes to local government. Rowett's analysis, which remains the most comprehensive, stops in

⁸ See above, page 17.

⁹ J.Davis, 'Central Government and the Towns, 1840-1950', unpublished chapter for M.Daunton, (ed.) *Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Vol 3, 1840-1950*, (forthcoming, 1997).

1939; the Attlee years are not considered. This pre-Second World War chronology derives its rationale from Rowett's argument: it is his contention that a correlation can be observed between the increasing strength and success of the national party and its attitude towards the scope and significance of local government. In 1945, after a period of co-option in the wartime coalition, the party obtained power at Westminster with a large majority. The platform of local government that had done so much to launch this success was no longer so important to Labour's strategy. It is on this basis that Rowett feels able to omit the wartime and Attlee years from the equation. For example, he discounts the analysis of the Attlee years by contemporary local government expert, W.A. Robson. In 1953 Robson argued that the recent Labour government, which in broad ideological terms he supported, had displayed a 'strange and in some ways incomprehensible' attitude to local government.¹⁰ Rowett suggests that, in fact, the Attlee years had demonstrated neither, but had simply instituted policies which 'followed inevitably' from the 'strongly centralising and functionalist' view of local government which had become dominant by 1939.¹¹ William Robson's contemporary analysis does, indeed, have its problems. One can, perhaps, concur with Robson's conclusion: the Attlee government's response was confused and characterised more by procrastination than concerted action. However, his proposition that 'at no stage during these vital years of reconstruction has there appeared within the labour movement the slightest sign of any understanding of the problems and dangers which confront local government in Britain, nor any inclination to inquire into the position' needs considerable modification.¹² In fact, both Rowett's historical analysis and Robson's contemporary outcry are misleading and they are misleading for the same reason: they share a disregard for the fact that during the later 1930s and under pressure of wartime reconstruction, significant sections of the party expressed considerable interest in the relationship between central and local government. Indeed, a number of key socialist intellectuals and politicians began to express concern at the effects centralised planning might have on local government and the implications of these developments on citizenship. Notions of decentralisation, while

¹⁰ W.A. Robson, 'Labour and Local Government', *Political Quarterly*, 24, (1953) 39.

¹¹ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 359, 334.

¹² Robson, 'Labour and Local Government', 39.

held strongly by those in the ILP and among guild socialists did not, as Rowett and others suggest, disappear under the countervailing pressure of a centralist-minded labourism.¹³ Also, while the future relevance of a local power base may have diminished to those most directly in line to benefit from an increasing national presence, Labour members were sharply reminded of the value of a vigorous local government following the political collapse of the national party in 1931. The regeneration of party fortunes included a concerted local government strategy which, for many Labour members and supporters, went beyond political pragmatism. More than just a stepping stone to a resurrection of national fortunes, success in municipal government could reveal what a decentralised, local socialism could achieve.¹⁴ As James Griffiths remembered, 'during the years of the depression, I had been deeply impressed by the services rendered to our people by our councils. It is not too much to say that their salvage work saved our community from complete dissolution'.¹⁵

Concern at the deterioration of local democracy developed a strong political expression during the interwar years.¹⁶ Two interlinked structural problems were isolated as the root causes of this degeneration. First, the problem of relating the size of local

¹³ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 358, 331.

¹⁴ Particularly in London following Labour's success in LCC elections in 1934. In Sheffield Labour lost control of the city council in 1932, but returned to control the following year, capitalising on the popularity of its social initiatives, particularly housing, A. Thorpe, 'The Consolidation of a Labour Stronghold, 1926-1951', C. Binfield *et al* (eds.), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*, (Sheffield, 1993), 97-104. Rowett suggests that the party revived its interest in municipal politics during the middle 1930s primarily in terms of 'its potential for promoting parliamentary success'. While undoubtedly national power was the priority of Labour, as it was for all parties, the democratic value of local government remained a definite strand of Labour politics. See, for example, the publicity material of the London Labour Party in the year following the 1934 London County Council gains GLRO: Acc 2417/A/18.

¹⁵ J. Griffiths, *Pages From Memory*, (1969), 174.

¹⁶ Central government domination was, of course, a well-worked theme of local government analysts, becoming particularly strong during the middle decades of the 19th century, as manifested in the writings of J.S Mill. The resonance of local autonomy had an appeal right across the political spectrum, from laissez-faire Tories and Liberals to municipal socialists.

authorities to the functions they were charged with executing had been arousing concern for several decades. From 1889 the statutory duties and powers of local authorities expanded to include a wealth of social and public protection services, a piecemeal magnification which was not accompanied by a comprehensive revision of local government areas.¹⁷ Alongside this problem lay the difficulty of financing local services within the existing framework of the local rates. Both of these aspects elicited responses from Labour members and sympathisers, particularly once local government reform became a key political issue in the light of Poplarism and with the passage of the 1929 Local Government Bill which set about the dismantling of the poor law and a partial restructuring of the relationship between the local authorities and central government.¹⁸

The crisis of finance which affected local authorities was perceived by Labour members and other progressives as a weighty impediment to a vigorous local government system. It was a problem with a long gestation: a feature of late Victorian and Edwardian politics that had been augmented by the rising social demands of the early interwar years. By the mid-1920s an impasse had been reached in the fiscal relationship between central and local government.¹⁹ As the post-war boom disintegrated into slump and cutbacks,

¹⁷ For a brief overview of the scope of these changes see Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, 199-201. See also the parallel debate on regionalism current among geographers around the time of the First World War, for example, C.B. Fawcett, *Provinces of England: A Study of Some Geographical Aspects of Devolution*, (1919). The deficiency of existing local government areas was particularly germane to the expanding utility services, see J.F. Wilson, 'The Motives for Gas Nationalisation: Practicality or Ideology?', in R. Millward and J. Singleton (eds.), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain, 1920-50*, (1995), 150-2, 158.

¹⁸ Government discussion of the thorny problem of local government reform occurred through the Maclean Committee on the transfer of the functions of the poor law authorities. Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 100, 136-143; J.P. Bradbury, 'The 1929 Local Government Act: the Formulation and Implementation of Poor Law (health care) and Exchequer Grants Reforms for England and Wales (outside London)', (University of Bristol, unpublished PhD thesis, 1990; B.Gilbert, *British Social Policy, 1914-1939*, (1970), 203-35. See also Deacon and Briggs, 'Local Democracy and Central Policy', for the political row over 'pauper votes' in Poor Law Boards of Guardians elections which resurfaced during the mid-1920s, 355-56.

¹⁹ For the late Victorian and Edwardian crisis see J. Harris, 'The Transition to High Politics in English Social Policy, 1880-1914', in M. Bentley and J. Stevenson (eds.), *High*

local government found it increasingly difficult to meet the demands made upon it. The problem was exacerbated by a heated political environment. Ratepayers' associations, for example, had seemingly put a ceiling on the raising of revenue from the traditional rates.²⁰ The Labour party could not ignore this situation: practical politics demanded it pay attention. For example, following successes in the 1919 local elections Patrick Dollan, the leader of the Labour group on Glasgow city council, warned the new Labour councillors of the difficulty of their situation. Rate increases, though inevitable due to new statutory duties and the increased costs of labour and material, were likely to be attributed to Labour policies by Municipal Reformers and the Tory press.²¹ Nor did the pressure abate. Herbert Morrison's London Labour Party, for example, remained extremely sensitive to criticisms from Municipal Reformers and Ratepayers' Associations throughout the 1920s and early 1930s and was eager not to alienate middle-class voters particularly in the light of George Lansbury's dramatic actions at Poplar.²² It was well aware of the political importance of the rating issue and took steps to address the problem.²³

In an attempt to break free of this financial and political impasse, the Labour party explored several alternatives to the existing rating system. For instance, the possibility of substituting the rates with a local income tax was considered: at the end of

and Low Politics in Modern Britain, (Oxford, 1983), 73-76. See also Offer, *Property and Politics*; Daunt, 'Payment and Participation', 196-7; H.G. Wells, 'Locomotion and Administration: A Paper on Administrative Areas', (1902) published in *The Works of H. G. Wells*, (1924), 299.

²⁰ Cole Papers, D2/3/12, 'Draft Report of the Advisory Committee on Local Government on the Reform of Local Government Areas', *Labour Party Bulletin*, 1, 19, (1921). 213-220. See also Cronin, *The politics of State Expansion*, p.94.

²¹ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 118-9.

²² N. Branson, *Poplarism, 1919-25: George Lansbury and the Councillors' Revolt*, (1979).

²³ See, for example, GLRO: Acc. 2417/A/6, London Labour Party, *The Ratepayers' Real Friends*, Borough Council Election flyer, November 1919. See also, Cole Papers, D2/3/, Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, F.W. Pethwick-Lawrence, 'Draft Memorandum on Capital Levy and Local Finance', 9 June 1921. See also Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 117-9.

the First World War, many local Labour groups seized upon this idea as a means of improving the equity of local taxation. By removing the burden from occupancy and forcing those whose businesses were within the local authority area but whose homes were outside it to fulfil their responsibilities to the municipality, labour activists argued, this strategy could offer a fairer distribution of burdens. Susan Lawrence, a Labour member of the LCC submitted a memorandum on the issue to the party's Local Government Advisory Committee in 1919 but the idea foundered on the complexities of its administration and the committee was dissuaded from pursuing the matter further.²⁴

Other options were floated before the Local Government Advisory Committee at this time. F.W. Pethwick-Lawrence, for example, discussed the implications of a capital levy on local government finance. While local government coffers would not be directly affected by the capital levy as municipal undertakings, for example tramways, sewers and cemeteries, would be exempt there would, nevertheless, be an indirect benefit. Firstly, the levy would remove the nation's floating debt, bringing down the rate of interest. Municipalities, as a consequence, would be able to borrow more cheaply, thus freeing more capital for housing schemes, and other social programmes. Moreover, local authorities would benefit from the generalised lowering of prices which, Pethwick-Lawrence argued, would result from the imposition of a capital levy: as prices fell, so municipal expenditure would fall.²⁵ The Local Government Committee, however, seems to have been more concerned with the structural defects of local government finance than with the wider view presented by Pethwick-Lawrence and subsequent memoranda disregard this issue in favour of more direct solutions.

In the early 1920s, possibly the most seriously-examined alternative to the rating

²⁴ LPA: Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, Minutes, 27 March, 12 June, 28 August, 13 November 1919. See also Philip Snowden's views in his *Labour and National Finance*, (1920), 155-6, *Labour and the New World*, (1921), 140-1. After the issue had been discounted by the National Executive Committee, the Manchester borough party continued to press for the introduction of a local income tax at Party Conferences in the 1920s, possibly reflecting the continued influence of E.D.Simon, a firm advocate of the policy, on municipal politics. See E.D.Simon, *A City Council from Within*, (1926) cited in Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 120.

²⁵ Cole Papers, D2/3/5, Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, F.W.Pethwick-Lawrence, Draft Memorandum on Capital Levy and Local Finance, 9 June 1921.

system was 'that old stand-by of radical politics', the taxation of land values.²⁶ As noted in chapter two, the early twentieth-century debates on land reform posed fundamental questions about the role of the state and its claims upon the fiscal and physical resources of the nation, yet by the outbreak of war in 1914, these issues remained decidedly open and politically, and administratively, unresolved.²⁷ The early interwar years saw the return of the land question to the political arena. Although the disruption of war had delayed the development of the issue, it indirectly released two catalysts that together re-directed the issue back to the forefront of political debate. Firstly, the post-war decline of the parliamentary Liberal party, as David Cannadine has pointed out, 'uncoupled' the 'close connection between radical political attitudes and belief in the spiritual solace of nature' with the result that other political parties could now appropriate 'the transcendental rural rhetoric.'²⁸ The Labour party was significantly affected by this changing political framework. It received and harboured a number of ex-Liberals, many of whom had taken an active interest in the land question and related issues. Josiah Wedgwood, the long-established radical land campaigner was the best known export to the party.²⁹ The appeal of the land question, however, stretched beyond radical rhetoric to the immediate political situation. Widespread concern for urban overcrowding, the housing shortage and an increasing anxiety for the state of the nation's staple industries, operated within a political environment increasingly dominated by 'anti-waste' and rate restriction movements. In this atmosphere the idea of land taxation, of recouping the unearned increment of increased land values, gained a fresh potency. The crucial point is that, at this juncture, the land question became a conduit for the examination of ideas pertinent to the issue of

²⁶ Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 202.

²⁷ The debate had produced legislative expression, but the arrangement was fragmented and incomplete. Lloyd George's attempt to incorporate the land taxation ideals of Henry George within the nation's taxation framework foundered, in large part, on their own complexity.

²⁸ D.Cannadine, *G.M.Trevelyan*, (1993), 151.

²⁹ Other land reform enthusiasts moved further to the right. G.M.Trevelyan, for example, became attracted by Baldwinite images of the land. The land question thus remained ideologically variable and contested in its abstract, philosophical dimension. *Ibid.*, (1993).

citizenship.³⁰ It became a pivotal component of the search for an equitable policy for the redistribution of the nation's wealth, and in the specific case of local government finance, of replacing a regressive rating system with a more equitable and flexible policy.³¹

The Labour party examined these connections in its internal discussions on land policy. In May 1923 MacDonald appointed a Land Policy Advisory Committee under the auspices of the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Joint Research and Information Department to assist the party in formulating a clear and practical land policy, both rural and urban. It was asked to give 'special reference to' the issues of 'land ownership and tenure and the rating and taxation of land values.'³² As argued in chapter two, the committee patently did not view the issue as an isolated policy, nor one exclusively

³⁰ It is not surprising that this should be so; as part of the contemporary debate on taxation structures and the extent of redistribution of the nation's resources, the land question became party to a long-established intellectual linking of citizenship with taxation policies. In the nineteenth century political citizenship as expressed through the mechanism of the franchise was explicitly linked with taxation. Gladstone, in particular, was eager to see this link forged arguing in 1859 'that it is desirable in a high degree, where it can be effected, to connect the possession of the franchise with the payment in taxes.' It was his belief that "liability to tax would inspire a sense of fiscal responsibility and the proper discharge of that liability would be the prerequisite for citizenship. Full membership in the polity would be restricted to a 'self-taxing class of income-tax paying electors.' Cronin, *Politics of State Expansion*, 21. The link between citizenship and taxation remains a central part of current political rhetoric. The Conservative strategy of low taxation is viewed and articulated as a means of empowerment, allowing the citizen, *qua* consumer to decide how to dispose of her or his income.

³¹ The land question, however, has not featured in the majority of studies of the Labour party in this period. Its strong connection with Liberal fiscal policy between 1909-1914 and its presentation as a free trade alternative to the Conservatives tariff proposals has, perhaps obscured Labour's interest in the strategy in the pre-First World War and interwar periods. A common view of historians, although even this is inferred rather than stated, seems to be that while intellectually the Labour party shared with radical Liberals a long involvement with land values policies, it never succeeded in taking any positive action.

³² LPA: Land Policy, Minutes, 5 June 1923. Its establishment was precipitated by Arthur Henderson's letter of support to the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values in 1923, and lubricated by heavy lobbying by Wedgwood. Rowett, 'The Labour Party and Local Government', 121.

concerned with agricultural issues.³³ At the local level, members of the committee argued, the taxation of land values could offer local authorities an additional source of revenue or a partial or complete substitute for conventional rates.³⁴ The land committee reported in 1923, its recommendations including a proposal that local authorities be empowered to set and raise a local flat-rate levy on all lands within the authority's boundaries. Although the report was never 'officially accepted by the Party', its consideration having been disrupted by the 1923 election campaign,³⁵ site value taxation became a stated policy aim in the mid- to late-1920s, and was even adopted by Snowden as part of the Finance Act in 1931, though the National Government swiftly dropped and then repealed the measure.³⁶

Labour's post-First World War examination of new sources of local revenue brought few tangible results, and clear policies for alternative devices did not come to fruition. Instead, the primary response to the crisis of local government finance, a response generally shared by all parties, was an increased reliance on Exchequer grants

³³ H.S. Kilner argues that the Labour Party's examination of land values policy was initiated through concern for agriculture and rural decline, 'The Contribution of the Labour Party to the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act', (University of London, unpublished MPhil, 1982), 54. While this was certainly one angle of approach, Christopher Addison, for example, addressed the issue from this perspective during this period, it was by no means the overwhelming concern. The basis for its examination was much broader.

³⁴ This re-allocation of local tax burdens, it was suggested, could alleviate unemployment through the relief of industry from the twin burdens of high rates and high land prices. Dalton, for example, argued that the derating of 'improvements' which could follow the implementation of taxation of land values, would 'stimulate building, etc. and diminish unemployment'. See LPA: Land Policy (2), Hugh Dalton, Memoranda, 3.

³⁵ LPA: Land Policy, Minutes, February 1925.

³⁶ LPA: NEC, Joint meeting of the General Council and the Executive Committee, 26 March 1925; *The Labour Party: Report of the Twentieth-Eight Annual Conference*, (1928), 230; *Labour and the Nation*, (1928); Wedgwood, *The Land Question. Taxation and the Rating of Land Values*, (1929). Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 252, 27 April 1931, 1411, Vol. 252, 4 May 1931, 50. The measure was repealed by the National Government in 1934. As noted above, however, support for site value rating remained relatively strong among local party activists, particularly in the London Labour Party. See, for example, GLRO: Acc/2417/A/6-7, 13, 18. In addition, the issue linked up with the re-opened debate on unearned wealth, for example, Meade's interest in a capital tax in the early 1940s. See Whiting, 'The Boundaries of Taxation'.

for the funding of locally provided services, particularly relief of the able-bodied unemployed. Labour accepted this measure as a means to break the inelasticity of local government finance, to equalise the distribution of the nation's resources and to encourage a national minimum of service provision.³⁷ However, the party had stated back in 1921 that their advocacy of 'the development of the policy of central grants-in-aid' carried 'the manifest disadvantage of leading to greater centralisation', and that over-reliance on this system endangered 'the special character of English Local Government'.³⁸ As the matter became more thoroughly debated in the context of the Conservative Government's Local Government Bill of 1928, these broader implications of the grants-in-aid system heightened concern and recognition of the defects of the system increased. While provision of grants-in-aid nominally mitigated the need for rate equalisation between poorer and wealthier areas it ultimately failed to address what many urged was the crux of the problem, that is the composition of local government itself. Indeed, it provided the focal point for a rising concern for the future viability of local government and the potential detriment to the development of an active democracy.

During the later 1920s and 1930s academics and interested commentators articulated these fears. Foremost among them was W.A. Robson, a barrister by training and a lecturer in public administration at the London School of Economics. Robson was also the editor of *Political Quarterly* and, until 1931, of the Labour-sponsored *Local Government News*, and he used both of these organs to express his concerns for the future of local government.³⁹ In 1933, for example, a vociferous article in *Political Quarterly* outlined the dangers of the mismatch of responsibility and resources in local government. His critical commentary highlighted the Local Government Act of 1929. While the Act sought to rectify the inelasticity of local government finance by extending

³⁷ See, for example, the discussion of grants-in-aid in the Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, Cole papers, D2/3/6, S. Webb, 'Draft Memorandum on the Grant-in-Aid', 25 June 1921. Webb supported grants-in-aid as a means to achieve a 'national minimum' standard of service; see Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 161. See also, Cronin, *Politics of State Expansion*, 92-96 and Whiting, 'The Boundaries of Taxation', 146-69.

³⁸ 'Draft Report of the Advisory Committee on Local Government on the Reform of Local Government Areas', *Labour Party Bulletin*, 1, 19, (1921), 213.

³⁹ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 47, 54.

the deployment of grants-in-aid, its measures also secured for central government further 'rights of inspection, supervision, control and criticism over certain activities of local authorities'.⁴⁰ Consequently, in Robson's view, the Act was further evidence of the creeping extension of central government control over local authorities, a control which though expanding since the mid-nineteenth century had recently taken on much greater proportions.⁴¹ For instance, under the provisions of the act ministerial control increased in a qualitative, as well as quantitative, sense. Previous to the 1929 revision the grants-in-aid system was allocated on a percentage basis and distributed according to the existing level of local government expenditure so that a considerable proportion of the cost of local authority schemes were met by the exchequer. It was a system, Robson argued, which for all its faults encouraged 'the initiative of progressive authorities' while penalising 'the recalcitrance of the backward ones' who fell below the national minimum standard.⁴² The new 1929 regulations, however, supplemented the national minimum requirement with a provision enabling the Minister of Health to 'impose a national maximum of performance and to punish any attempt to exceed that maximum by a penalty of unlimited severity.'⁴³ Local initiative in social provision, therefore, was inhibited.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ W.A. Robson, 'The Central Domination of Local Government', *Political Quarterly*, 4, (1933), 95.

⁴¹ Robson pointed to the surcharging of the Poplar borough councillors by the district auditor - a central government appointee - in 1925 as a notable example of central government overturning of local democratic choice. See *ibid.*, 91-4 and W.A. Robson, *The District Auditor: "An Old Menace in a New Guise"*, Fabian Tract 214, (1925).

⁴² Robson, 'The Central Domination of Local Government', 90.

⁴³ *Ibid.*; W.A. Robson, *The Development of Local Government*, (1953, 3rd. edn.), 36. Not only could he who paid the piper call the tune, he could confiscate the pipe if he did not like the rendition.

⁴⁴ Of course, the situation may have appeared rather differently to the Labour representatives of the poorer local authorities. For these areas, a percentage grant offered relatively little support given its distribution according to existing levels of spending. Consequently, the percentage grant was deemed by many local labour activists to be regressive of need and ineffective in easing the pressing matter of the great variation in extent and quality of local service provision. The new block grant, however, was needs-based according to five indicators - population, rateable value, level of unemployment,

In articulating these views, Robson refuted the Minister of Health, Neville Chamberlain's assertion that the 1929 Act was designed to increase local government autonomy. Proponents of Chamberlain's Act argued that block grant reform released local authorities from detailed central control over individual items of grant-aided expenditure.⁴⁵ However, the Treasury's justification for the replacement of percentage grants by block grant funding demonstrated a different perspective. Block grants, unlike percentage grants, were to be fixed by central government for a period of years and no longer determined by the level of local government spending in individual years. Treasury officials proclaimed the measure as restoring control to the *national* taxpayer, via the medium of central government. To the Treasury, block grant reform signified its attempt to regain control over what was becoming an increasingly important item of revenue expenditure.⁴⁶ Moreover, recent research by J.P. Bradbury into the formulation of the 1929 Act, suggests that this interpretation of the Treasury's was shared by Neville Chamberlain. At the base of Chamberlain's agenda, Bradbury argues, lay an intensely political motivation for reform.⁴⁷ Firstly, Baldwin's Conservative government was likely to gain an electoral advantage by presenting the poor law reforms contained within the Local Government Bill as evidence of its commitment to social reform. Yet, the party political benefits of the reform stretched even further. The success of Labour in elections for poor law Boards of Guardians in the early 1920s was problematic enough for the Conservative government, but the Labour victories in the 1926 municipal elections brought home to the Conservative party the extent of Labour's progress at the local level. Bradbury has argued that Chamberlain was particularly aware of this situation and was

number of children under five and population per mile of road - and was more progressive, allowing the Minister of Health to meet the demands of 'necessitous areas' for relief. The Labour party's views, therefore, might be characterised as split on this issue: Robson, as an essentially metropolitan figure approaching the issue of central-local government relations from a theoretical perspective, was largely free from the pressing concerns of local Labour activists and thus could perhaps afford to develop such a critical view where many of Labour's members could not.

⁴⁵ Bradbury, 'The 1929 Local Government Act', 36-7, 69-70; Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 198-99.

⁴⁶ Bradbury, 'The 1929 Local Government Act', 35, 39.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 183-90.

prepared to use his executive position to weaken Labour in the localities. By eliminating the Boards of Guardians from poor law administration, Chamberlain would be able to weaken local Labour representatives' ability to interfere with poor law policy. In essence, Bradbury suggests that Chamberlain was willing to subvert local democracy in order to displace Labour from its local power bases.⁴⁸ This analysis, however, is in danger of oversimplifying Chamberlain's perspective. In particular, it underrates the strength of Chamberlain's belief in the importance of local government to the British democratic system as demonstrated in the disagreement between himself and Winston Churchill over the derating of industry provisions. D.N.Chester's study of central-local government relations which began in 1936-7 attests to the genuine nature of Chamberlain's concern for local democracy. However, while Chamberlain himself is absolved from blame in this analysis, Chester concurs with William Robson's view that this period of local government reform was indeed characterised by a depreciation of local autonomy. At fault, in Chester's opinion, were Churchill's provisions for the derating of agriculture and the three-quarters derating of industry and the railways which became associated with the 1929 Local Government Act.⁴⁹ The resulting loss of rateable value, he argued, reduced the financial autonomy of local government and, as a consequence, seriously weakened the position of local authorities in relation to central government.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Bradbury is correct to point out that Chamberlain's appreciation of local democracy was squarely directed towards the county and county borough tier, and not the lower tier bodies, especially the Boards of Guardians, which he regarded as administratively and politically unreliable. In this specific context, therefore, the 1929 local government reform might well be seen as an attempt to ensure local administration was in safe hands by concentrating local government power in the county and county borough councils 'where Labour had far fewer successes in the 1920s and had much less potential for the future.'⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 195-6.

⁴⁹ For a brief discussion of the motivations for, and the provisions of, Churchill's derating scheme see Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 199-200.

⁵⁰ D.N.Chester, *Central and Local Government*, (1951), 338.

⁵¹ Bradbury, 'The 1929 Local Government Act', 195-6. However, as John Davis has noted, the block grant was fixed for five years, and this protected the local authorities

William Robson, like many other critics of the interwar relationship between central and local government, did not deny the necessity of some degree of central control and planning in his critique of central-local government relations. He did, however, insist that any centralised control be formulated and implemented with rationality and, above all, with sensitivity to the importance of local initiative and 'municipal self-respect'.⁵² In Robson's opinion, the block grant reforms of the 1929 Local Government Act were not the most appropriate means to effect a stronger local democracy. Altering the terms of administration did not remedy the most worrying aspect of local-central relations, that is the extent to which local authorities had come to rely on central funding.⁵³ It was this fact which gave central government its main basis for control. As Bradbury has noted in his study of the Act, a genuine reversal of 'the trend towards the erosion of democracy' was regarded by Robson and others, as involving much greater questions of the reform of local government areas and finance.⁵⁴

As with the failings of local government finance, the lack of correlation between the unit area and the functions of local government had caused alarm since the turn of the century when the later nineteenth-century expansion and intensification of urban development massively increased the burdens of local government, most notably in the areas of sanitary, education and poor law policy.⁵⁵ The problem of local government areas

from cuts in the early 1930s. Davis, 'Central Government and the Towns'.

⁵² Robson, 'The Central Domination of Local Government', 102.

⁵³ Indeed, the 1929 Act in incorporating the derating of agriculture and three-quarters derating of industry and the railways had, as D.N.Chester stressed, decreased the local basis for raising income. Compensation for this loss through the mechanism of the block grant had therefore increased local authority reliance on central funds.

⁵⁴ Bradbury, 'The 1929 Local Government Act', 70-1. See also Crowther, *Social Policy in Britain, 1914-1939*, (1988), 77. Robson stressed the significance of areas as well as finance in his analyses of the central-local government relationship. See, for example, Robson, *The Development of Local Government*.

⁵⁵ The Fabians had been particularly keen to press for reform of this matter. See, for example, G. Bernard Shaw, *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, (1904), 120. For the wartime and immediate post-war resumption of debate see the report of the Local Government Committee of the Reconstruction Committee on *Transfer of the Functions*

was highlighted and, indeed, heightened, by these developments. For instance, the rising political interest in the reform of the poor law between c.1900 and 1929 was due, at least in part, to the recognition that a system designed to cope with underemployment in an essentially rural society, was failing to cope with growing urban unemployment. Moreover, technological advancements, evidenced in the expanding electricity, gas and transport services were distorting the existing local government system, detaching the administration of these services from the local community, and vesting control either in non-elected, particularist bodies or in the central government. By the 1920s there was general agreement among those concerned with the state of local government services that larger administrative areas were necessary if the system was to cope with the increased responsibilities demanded.⁵⁶

In 1920 the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Local Government addressed the question of areas after a memorandum by Beatrice Webb drew attention to the importance of the issue for Labour policy.⁵⁷ The reform of areas, G.D.H.Cole argued, was required on both functional and democratic grounds:

In England...today areas of every size can be found, but, except in certain cases, services are not allotted on the basis of area and population, but according to the different categories of local authority. The result of this lack of system is that it is only by accident that the local government unit coincides with the economical unit.⁵⁸

Equally problematic, however, was the accelerating drive 'towards centralised bureaucracy in administration' as co-ordination between local authorities was increasingly

of Poor Law Authorities in England and Wales, Cmd. 8917, (1918); Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 100-1.

⁵⁶ Many of the Fabian advocates of reform, for instance, stressed the urgent need to divert responsibility for social services away from a 'choked and blocked' Parliament. Yet the success of this strategy, they argued, lay in the enlargement of local government areas. See Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 101-3.

⁵⁷ The Committee was set up in May 1918. Beatrice Webb's memorandum of February 1920 provoked considerable discussion and led to a series of meetings during Spring 1920. To assist the party, a series of memoranda were commissioned from sympathetic experts on the correlation between reform of areas and developments in health, education, transport, rating, town planning and water and electricity supply, Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 103-4.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 105.

enforced by 'the Central Government Department dealing with the particular service in question.'⁵⁹ Herbert Morrison's proposals to the committee, focused more closely on this issue of responsibility, though here emphasis was placed upon the distortion of the democratic value of local government rendered by *ad hoc*, appointed or indirectly-elected authorities. Morrison deeply objected to the tendency to create special delegate bodies for specific purposes, for example, the Port of London Authority, the Metropolitan Water Board, and the Joint Electricity Authorities being created through the country under the Act of 1919. 'These bodies', he argued, 'are not run by representatives of the people: they are run by representatives of representatives.... It is almost impossible for the policy of such bodies to be the subject of political and electoral controversy; consequently the citizen as such is nowhere.'⁶⁰

The weight of opinion within the Labour party's local government advisory committee lay in favour of the institution of a regional tier to local government. This additional level would be able to subtract powers from 'the highly congested central government and also to extend public enterprise into industry.'⁶¹ Moreover, as Morrison argued, with major services re-located to directly-elected 'Regional Parliaments', the municipal councils would be able to concentrate on the 'important and numerous local services which are better left in local hands'.⁶² Opinions varied on the details of reform, but at this stage the NEC was not called upon to adjudicate between the various regional

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Cole Papers, D2/2/10, Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, H. Morrison, 'Draft Memorandum on Reorganisation of Local Government', May 1920. Morrison's London Labour Party were actively campaigning against such bodies at this time. See, for example, GLRO: Acc 2417/A/7, 695, London Labour Party, 'Draft Resolutions for Eighth Annual Conference', 12 August 1921; Acc 2417/A/8, 1063, Meeting of Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee, 29 May, 7 June 1922; Acc 2417/A/8, 1070, London Labour Party statement to the Royal Commission on London Government, 1922; Acc 2417/A/9, 1950, Draft Manifesto and Programme of the London Labour Party, 23 December 1924. Similar statements continue throughout the later 1920s and into the 1930s, always reiterating the damage wrought by such *ad hoc* bodies to the democratic government of London.

⁶¹ Quoted in Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 104-5.

⁶² Cole Papers, D2/2/10, Morrison, 'Draft Memorandum on the Reorganisation of Local Government'.

schemes presented, as the tighter economic climate and the confused parliamentary situation of late 1921 ensured the "postponement" of Addison's proposal for the fundamental reorganisation of local government. In part, the ambiguity of the regional alternative and the variety of strategies offered under its umbrella had enabled central policy makers to overlook the issue.⁶³ In addition, Rowett argues that the sentiments of the Advisory Committee's local government report were strongly countered by the increasing economic unity of the country, the Labour party's apparent proximity to national power, the aversion of the trade unions towards devolution, and by the hostility of party activists who saw the regionalist proposals as damaging to their 'most immediate prospect of the direct exercise of power', that is, local government. While there were elements within the local party which seized the regionalist solution to the problem of areas, most notably the London Labour Party which adopted the principles of regional reform in their submission to the Royal Commission on Local Government, other local representatives were divided: 'the only firm decision taken by the [Advisory] Committee' when it met in February 1924 to decide upon a united Labour policy on local government reform, 'was to let the sub-committee on areas lapse'.⁶⁴ Rowett concludes that although the 'modernisation' of local government had won many converts, the 'political costs of adopting any particular scheme of reform always appeared to outweigh its administrative merits'. By the end of the 1930s, he argues, 'the national party's local government policy was, if anything, more ill-defined than previously'.⁶⁵

However, the economic and social developments of the interwar years intensified the perception that the existing local government units were failing and calls for constructive reform continued to emanate from Labour circles.⁶⁶ Several problems were isolated. First, in many areas of the country rapid urban development was placing

⁶³ J. Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government Reform 1900-1960', in P. Garside and M. Hebbert (ed.), *British Regionalism 1900-2000*, (1989), 44.

⁶⁴ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 111-117.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 117; 330-1.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Robson, *The Development of Local Government* (1932, 2nd ed.), 60 and G.D.H. Cole, 'A Hundred Years of Local Government', *New Statesman and Nation*, 7 September 1935, 296-8.

enormous strains upon the rigid local government structure. At the end of the 1930s, G.D.H. Cole highlighted this problem with the graphic example of London:

we, who in the past two decades have watched London swelling visibly, eating up not only green fields but one neighbouring town or village after another, getting more and more congested at the centre and more and more shapeless at the circumference, have cause to know that our capital city has not government empowered to regulate its growth or to save its citizens from the consequences of its planless development.⁶⁷

In particular, the outer reaches of London, increasingly integrated in economic, social and cultural terms, remained administratively detached, and ‘wholly beyond the jurisdiction of the London County Council’.⁶⁸ The prevailing solution, the proliferation of *ad hoc* bodies to co-ordinate cross-London affairs, Herbert Morrison argued, had become an expensive habit, with

Ministers...[almost ceasing] to apologise for creating Greater London authorities for purposes which, if local government were rationally organised in the area, could have been discharged under normal local government auspices....There are people who believe that the establishment of a special authority will solve most problems of co-ordination, whereas it may have done little more than create a salary list.⁶⁹

Yet, as Morrison and William Robson both asserted, the desirability of a Greater London authority went beyond the need for co-ordinated and efficient administration: it encompassed the more abstract concerns of the future of democracy and civic unity in the capital and its hinterland.⁷⁰ A directly-elected Greater London Council, Robson suggested, might go some way to ‘interest the electors in the vital problems of the metropolis as a whole, and to make them aware of their citizenship of the Greater

⁶⁷ Cole Papers, A/32/7, Cole, ‘London’s Jubilee’, 1939. The strong contemporary focus on problems of town planning to highlight the rationality of the regionalist solution will be considered in more detail in chapter 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* W.A. Robson also used the example of London in his advocacy of a regional tier to local government. See his *Government and Misgovernment of London*, (1939).

⁶⁹ H. Morrison, *How Greater London is Governed*, (1935), 122.

⁷⁰ See, for example, a review of Robson’s *The Government and Misgovernment of London*, ‘Importance and Impotence’, *The Common Room*, July 1939, 19, Robson Papers, press cutting books, 1919-1939.

London community'.⁷¹ In 1934, the London Labour Party delivered this message to the electorate of the London County Council, urging 'the people of London to manifest a great spirit of civic patriotism and idealism by supporting them in their call for a London-wide authority' and, thus, contributing to an invigoration of their capital and its environs.⁷²

Local government, under the forces of suburbanisation, was ceasing to be 'balanced'. As H.G.Wells had noted at the turn of the century, people were now living in one area, working in another and shopping in a third: local units no longer reflected community. Moreover, local units were ceasing to be 'complete minor economic systems, with the rich moving away from the poor, rendering local authorities homogeneous not heterogeneous, and ill-fitted to cope with the economic demands placed upon them'.⁷³ This situation was perceived as one of the problems of local government in Tyneside when explored by the Royal Commission in 1937. In Hebburn, for example, out of a population of 24,000 only 50 'belonged to the employing class and there were no professional men, except the doctors and clergymen whose work more or less compelled them to reside in the town'.⁷⁴ This imbalance, it was argued, led to an extravagant level of local government expenditure as local councils responded, perhaps irresponsibly, to the needs of a predominately working-class electorate. A regional solution to local government in the area, it was felt, could restore balance to the community at a metropolitan scale.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Robson, *The Government and Misgovernment of London*, 169-74, 324, 331, 348-51.

⁷² GLRO: Acc 2417/A/18, 5774-5, 'Draft Manifesto: LCC elections 1934', 4 January 1934.

⁷³ Wells, 'Locomotion and Administration', 291-2, 299; Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government Reform', 45.

⁷⁴ *Report of the Royal Commission of Local Government in the Tyneside Area*, Cmd. 5402, (1937), 88.

⁷⁵ A similar view of regionalism as the solvent of class division can be found in the works of the geographer H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, (1945 ed. reprint of 1919 1st edition), 135. This was not a politically neutral recommendation, the demand for large areas reflected, as Owen points out, both the establishment concern over the perceived excesses of working class dominated councils and the reformers' concern to strengthen the redistributive aspect of municipal government. Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government', 45. The Royal Commission could not break down the divisions, its

Beyond this, the experience of intense depression in parts of the country exerted a significant influence on perceptions of the nation as a collection of regions and, more specifically, drew attention to the deficiencies of existing local government arrangements to deal with their social and economic dislocation. The Royal Commission on Local Government in Tyneside, for instance, saw the area's fragmented system of local government as a contributory factor in the depression, inhibiting coherent industrial and economic planning in the area.⁷⁶

In addition, the interwar drive towards a more extensive health care provision similarly raised the question of supra-local organisation, although the difficulties of reaching a consensus on what form such an administration should take dampened many initiatives in this direction.⁷⁷ Various notions of 'regionalism' surfaced in interwar health care debates, each closely connected to the deeper concerns of the various interested parties, as Webster notes:

the multipurpose local government form acceptable to Labour was distasteful to the medical profession and the voluntary sector because it was perceived as leading to a full-time salaried service under political control. *Ad hoc* health authorities were attractive to the profession and to the voluntary sector because they promised access to public funds without the risk of bureaucratic or political intervention, but this solution was unacceptable to Labour and local authorities because it threatened to deny local authorities their major opportunity for expansion.⁷⁸

For the Labour party and the SMA local authority control denoted democratic control, and this was paramount. Yet, it was clear that the existing ramshackle arrangements for local government would have to be changed if a co-ordinated and comprehensive service was to emerge within this framework, a process which was bound to be politically

recommendations were covered in both a majority and a minority report, but failed to gain government sponsorship.

⁷⁶ *Report of the Royal Commission of Local Government in the Tyneside Area*; Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government Reform', 47-9. Also the causal link between the industrial decline of the 'Special Areas' and the economic and spatial growth of London were beginning to be drawn by advocates of wider planning. See P. Garside, 'The Failure of Regionalism in 1940s Britain' in Garside and Hebbert, *British Regionalism*, 101.

⁷⁷ Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus'; Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 328. Also see above, chapter 3.

⁷⁸ Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus', 128.

sensitive and practically awkward.⁷⁹ By the outbreak of war in 1939 Labour's policy on local government was, as Rowett argues, 'ill-defined', but, importantly, key beliefs were still in place: local government was regarded as a vital component for the delivery of the state's social commitment to its citizens and, more broadly, a crucial element in the democratic framework.⁸⁰

By the mid-1940s, awareness of the practical deficiencies of local government had fused with a more abstract concern with the implications of centralisation. If, in general terms, the Second World War advanced the idea of economic and social planning through fostering a favourable ideological environment and even, perhaps, by vindicating the methods of state centralisation, it also saw the development of counter-arguments.⁸¹ Stephen Brooke, for example, has eloquently described the impact of the libertarian critique of planning on the Labour party and among its sympathizers in academia. Evan Durbin, Harold Laski, Barbara Wootton, James Meade and R.H. Tawney, for example, all issued responses to its challenge.⁸² The themes themselves were not new, echoing, for example, many of the pre-war concerns of Harold Laski and R.H. Tawney and drawing on pre-existing concerns about the problem of freedom under planning within the Labour movement.⁸³ The central theme of the wartime reconsideration of freedom under a planned economic and social system was the assertion that planning and democracy need not be mutually exclusive. In 1943, for example, Laski declared, 'What we seek to plan

⁷⁹ Labour party statements on local government during the war reflect this view that if local government was to play a significant role in reconstruction, it would have to be systematically and sensitively overhauled. See, for example, LPA: Local Government Memoranda, 212, statement by Susan Lawrence, 12 August 1941; *Labour's Home Policy*, (1940).

⁸⁰ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 330-1.

⁸¹ See, Brooke, *Labour's War*, 275-80.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 280-281.

⁸³ See, for example, H. Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State*, (1930). The work of Lionel Robbins had encourage many pro-Labour thinkers to consider the issue of freedom under planning. For Robbins' view see his book *The Great Depression*, (1935). For the impact of Hayek who was, of course, brought over to Britain by Robbins, see Tomlinson, 'Planning: Debate and Policy in the 1940s', 154-174.

for are democracy and freedom'.⁸⁴ For democracy to be truly active and participatory, freedom had to extend beyond the political to the social and economic field. Laski, and others who shared this concern, argued that planning, carefully and sensitively implemented, was in fact the means to achieve this social and economic citizenship: the greater economic security achieved through the planned distribution of the nation's resources would fortify, not diminish or deny, self-expression and personal freedom.⁸⁵ The commitment to planning was thus refined: the defence of planning could not deny its dangers, however, those dangers were to be acknowledged, confronted and thus dissipated, in the practice of democratic socialism. Among the perceived risks of an over-reliance on centralised planning was the expropriation, by default or design, of the democratic potential of local government. This was not a new concern, the argument, as explained above, had been prompted by the realities of interwar local government. By the later years of the Second World War, therefore, the abstract concern for the potential dangers of centralised planning and the practical deficiencies of local government in resisting this trend were increasingly seen in conjunction. In their discussion, in the rhetoric used and the remedies suggested, ideas of citizenship, of neighbourhood, and of community participation, figure strongly. As with the more abstract concern about planning there is a noticeable refutation of the incompatibility of planning and participation: indeed, the solutions offered explicitly sought their combination.

This issue can profitably be explored through the ideas of G.D.H. Cole who wrote frequently on local government and related subjects during this period. At the time of the First World War, Cole had criticised Fabian-style collectivism, regarding its emphasis on centralisation as damaging to democracy. In 1921, for example, his book *The Future of Local Government* applied guild socialist ideas to the question of local government function and structure, as a counter to what he believed to be the vision of

⁸⁴ H. Laski, *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, (1943), 181, cited in Brooke, *Labour's War*, 282.

⁸⁵ Brooke, *Labour's War*, 282.

the Webbs.⁸⁶ According to Rowett, Cole in the 1920s provided the intellectual rationale for the 'communitarian and decentralist view of local government' that was matched in practice by calls for an Enabling Bill to extend trading and other rights to local authorities.⁸⁷ Yet, Rowett continues, within a decade Cole and his fellow pluralist Laski were producing the theoretical writings which complemented the Labour party's institutional shift towards centralisation.⁸⁸ Cole did indeed join the efficiency and planning bandwagon in the early 1930s and, it seems, did so with such mastery that many historians have neglected to see that his interest in pluralism and decentralisation did not fade completely.⁸⁹ By the end of the 1930s, arguably, its main outlet was an interest in developing the democratic potential of local government.

Central to Cole's thought was the belief that an active and participatory democracy was only to be achieved through a collection of small units, whether at the workplace or part of the machinery of government. The experience of the 1930s and the war years had not destroyed this belief and while, for Cole, there was no going back to the guild socialist refutation of state sovereignty, the challenge of totalitarianism had demonstrated that democracy required the state to leave room for people to 'live as citizens of Leviathan and not as slaves'.⁹⁰ A revitalised local government system could be the medium.

⁸⁶ G.D.H. Cole, *The Future of Local Government*, (1921). For the Webbs' view of a reformed system of local government see S. and B. Webb, *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain*, (1920).

⁸⁷ Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government', 334.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 346-9.

⁸⁹ Brooke, *Labour's War* is a welcome exception. There is a similar danger of overestimating the extent to which Laski's interest in the class struggle and Leninism during the 1930s displaced his concern for liberty. Indeed, his concentration on the class struggle and the abuse of state power underscored his conviction that power was not shared equally in the community and that, as a consequence, liberty was being infringed. This view endured, see H. Laski, *Will Planning Restrict Our Freedom?*, (Cheam, 1945), 33; Brooke, *Labour's War*, 283-4.

⁹⁰ G.D.H. Cole, 'Leviathan and Little Groups', *Aryan Path*, 12, (1914), 438, quoted in Brooke, *Labour's War*, 290. Cole's message carried a note of caution: however desirable collectivism was, it did have the potential to damage democracy and steps needed to be taken immediately to avert the threat.

Cole's analysis reveals much about his understanding of the meaning of citizenship itself. Many in the Labour movement held a strong attachment to the belief that democracy and citizenship were expressed through the elective principle and its concomitant, public accountability. For example, and as noted above, the Labour party's first significant attempt to formulate policies for local government reform had focused on this point. The Advisory Committee on Local Government, which sat between 1918 and 1922, evaluated reform proposals, for *ad hoc* bodies or multi-purpose bodies, for local authorities or regional authorities, in the light of this tenet of democracy.⁹¹ Herbert Morrison, for instance, strongly asserted the importance of a direct link of accountability between representative and citizen in the delivery of democratic government.⁹² This understanding of democracy remained a strong force within the party throughout the period, but there were additional expressions of citizenship and democracy within the movement of which the ideas of Cole are part. Although the guild socialist days had ended, Cole's argument retained an appreciation of the fallibility of the political democracy of those he described as 'Jacobins and Benthamites', who placed their trust in a direct relationship between the individual and the state. The representative democracy they propounded, Cole argued, 'was atomistically conceived in terms of millions of voters, each casting his individual vote into a pool which was somehow mystically to boil up into a General Will.'⁹³ But the difficulty in achieving this transmutation could be seen in practice:

Torn away from his fellows, from the small groups which he and they had been painfully learning to manage, the individual was lost. He could not control the State: it was too big for him. Democracy in the State was a great aspiration; but in practice it was a sham.⁹⁴

⁹¹ LPA: Labour Party, Advisory Committee on Local Government, Memoranda 1-60, 1918-1922. See also Cole Papers, D2/2/1-13.

⁹² Cole Papers D2/2/10, Labour Party Advisory Committee on Local Government, Herbert Morrison, 'Draft Memorandum on Reorganisation of Local Government', 11 May 1920. See also his *Citizen's Charter*, London Labour Party pamphlet, (1921).

⁹³ G.D.H.Cole, 'Democracy Face to Face with Hugeness', (1941), reprinted in his *Essays in Social Theory*, (1950), 93.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Yet, Cole notes men and women did begin to create social groups they could manage democratically, such as Trade Unions, Friendly Societies, Co-operative societies

The importance of the small unit lay undiminished as a consequence.⁹⁵ In 1941 Cole argued this point as forcefully as ever he had in the 1920s:

Local government must rest upon small and manageable cells of real neighbourhood organisation, however big the cities of which these neighbourhoods are the atoms. City government, under modern conditions, cannot be democratic unless it rests on a foundation of democratic self-government of neighbours street by street, block by block, estate by estate, with a constant and real contact between members of the neighbourhood group and those who represent it upon the larger civil authority.

And he added, 'Nor must these smaller groups be mere electoral units: they must be democratic agencies for the direct communal administration of their little collective affairs.'⁹⁶ Only through this face-to-face democracy could active citizenship develop. Within the 'small man, big world' context of modern society the reformer's task was to suggest 'democratic ways of living for little men in big societies.'⁹⁷

G.D.H.Cole's response, which echoed elements of his views of the early 1920s, was the development of proposals for an additional, regional tier to local government. This was not the triumph of the Wellsian desire for large-scale administration, nor was it a contradiction of his beliefs as outlined above.⁹⁸ To Cole, indeed, it was the means to achieve the face-to-face democracy he desired. His reasoning is worth considering in some detail.

Cole's chief work on the issue, *Local and Regional Government*, published in 1947, begins with a discourse on the purpose of local government. In his opinion

and other voluntary associations. However, 'these natural growths of the spirit of democracy' were thwarted, both by the state and by the growth of larger, more unified organisational structures. In addition, they were sectional groups which did not represent the 'whole man', and thus could not form an adequate substitute for a 'neighbourhood group through which men could learn the act of citizenship in its more general aspect'.

⁹⁵ See also Cole's interest in small, pluralist groups, organised on a functional level, for example, voluntary societies and workshop groups. See below, pages 221-23.

⁹⁶ G.D.H.Cole, 'Plan for Living' in *Plan for Britain*, (1943), 27.

⁹⁷ M. Young, *Small Man, Big World: A Discussion of Socialist Democracy*, (1949). This pamphlet expressed concern about the alienating effects of centralisation, in terms similar to those of Cole; Cole, 'Democracy face to face with hugeness', 93.

⁹⁸ For H.G. Wells statement on regionalism see his 'Locomotion and Administration'.

insufficient thought had been paid to this question, with damaging results. The grafting of piecemeal revisions onto the totally artificial nineteenth-century framework had produced a structure which was inorganic, unsuitable and inherently weak.⁹⁹ Consequently, Cole argued, the interests of technicians and administrators had been accorded precedence over those of the citizens themselves.¹⁰⁰ In part, this trend had occurred by default because, tragically, most ordinary citizens had failed to express an interest in the question. Yet this fact alone was immensely significant. As Cole argued, the ordinary person's lack of opinion did not indicate contentment with the status quo, but rather 'that the existing institutions of local government have, on the whole, signally failed to arouse this interest.'¹⁰¹ Cole's analysis locates the roots of this predicament in the local government legacy bequeathed by the nineteenth century. It was an administrative inheritance shaped by the assumption that the functions of local government 'should be essentially residuary', confined to the 'indispensable tasks' which neither voluntary self-help, philanthropy, nor profit-seeking enterprise could tolerably execute.¹⁰² Yet, Cole argued, the paucity of citizen interest could be reversed if local government focused instead on 'the business of community-making': instead of 'treating it as the scavenger of the abuses with which no other agency can or will deal, we ought to regard it as the master-architect of the fabric of community living, in city, town and village, and in the regions within which city, town and village are comprised.'¹⁰³ It was a matter of deciding the rationale of local government and of creating a structure to match. This is the core of Cole's argument and the basis for his proposals. Modern society demanded efficient delivery of services: this trend was dynamic, it had been distorting the local government system for many years and was unlikely to be reversed

⁹⁹ G.D.H. Cole, *Local and Regional Government*, (1947), 2-20.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Wilson, 'The Motives for Gas Nationalisation', J.A.Hassan, 'The Water Industry 1900-51: a Failure of Public Policy?', M.Chick, 'The Political Economy of Nationalisation: The Electricity Industry', in Millward and Singleton (eds.), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation*, 144-63, 189-211, 257-74 respectively.

¹⁰¹ Cole, *Local and Regional Government*, 41.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 42, 47.

on both technical and economic grounds. Yet necessity could be made a virtue. The creation of a regional authority could reverse the associated drift towards *ad hoc* expedients and centralised control, both of which compromised democracy and participatory citizenship. Its creation would reinstate direct electoral accountability to those services which had been removed from local government in the interests of efficiency and restore planning and strategic control to the locality. Local autonomy would be regained.¹⁰⁴

As Cole was the first to point out, regionalism in the interwar period had been a contentious issue, with different meanings for different groups. Moreover, the war witnessed additional developments which further complicated his message. Consequently, Cole was at pains to point out where his proposals differed from previous developments, particularly the regional mechanisms established during the Second World War.¹⁰⁵ The wartime regional administration, he argued, was instituted from the perspective of military requirements and not for the enhancement of democracy, nor had they taken into account existing feelings of regional consciousness.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the wartime experience of regionalism was characterised by decentralisation of national administrative departments; it was unaccompanied by any growth of democratically elected organs. The Regional Commissioner was a bureaucrat of the centre, not the directly accountable representative of the citizens of the area. By way of contrast, Cole stressed the potential for democratic enhancement contained in his proposals. The wartime experience of regionalism was one of 'delegation', his approach was for 'organic self-government'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 87-88, 165-7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 17-9. Cole's views concur with those of the Labour Party Central Committee on Reconstruction Machinery of Local Government Sub-committee which noted the need to allay fears 'that wartime regionalism might be carried forward to the post-war world, to the exclusion of democratic government'. See LPA: Machinery of Local Government Sub-committee minutes (6), 14 May 1942; RDR/100, May 1942; RDR/190, February 1943. Concern had also been expressed in relation to the possible continuation of the regional system initiated under the Emergency Medical Service on similar grounds. See LPA: RDR/50, Labour Party Public Health Sub-Committee, 'Hospital Development. First Steps towards a Full State Medical Service', December 1941.

¹⁰⁶ Cole, *Local and Regional Government*, 86-8.

¹⁰⁷ Cole Papers, A1/32/8, G.D.H.Cole, 'What is Regionalism?', (1941).

Labour party policy documents similarly stressed the distinction between the regionalism of the wartime administration and their explorations of a postwar local government settlement. The wartime developments were nothing more than a 'devolution of the responsibilities of central government', a mechanism to ensure that the functions of government could be carried on in an emergency situation and, it argued, 'it must be ...emphatically stated that this type of organisation cannot be permitted to supplant a system of democratically elected local authorities' in peace.¹⁰⁸ Between 1940 and 1944 the Labour party's Local Government department and its Machinery of Local Government Sub-Committee picked up the threads of its exploration of local government reform in the early 1920s, seeing 'a change of spirit and tempo' in the mood of the people, making it ripe for major change.¹⁰⁹ Like Cole, the party acknowledged the relevance of the region in modern local government and similarly dismissed the possibility of using the regional unit in a single-authority local government system.¹¹⁰ This approach, while clearly justifiable on grounds of efficiency, was discounted because of the damage it would inflict upon local democracy and local patriotism. In sparsely-populated rural areas, the committee argued, the authority would have to be of sufficient size to collect adequate revenue from the rates; the result would be the creation of an unwieldy and 'remote body'.¹¹¹ To compensate, the administration of local services would have to be delegated to co-opted committees, which were regarded as 'feeble substitutes for local authorities democratically elected'.¹¹² Similarly, densely-populated urban areas

¹⁰⁸ LPA: RDR/190, Machinery of Local Government Sub-Committee, Draft Report, February 1943, 6; Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government Reform', 50.

¹⁰⁹ LPA: LG/145, Local Government Department, 'War and Postwar Policy', January 1940; LG/212, S. Lawrence, 'Reconstruction', August 1941.

¹¹⁰ The main articulation of this idea came from the Association of Municipal Corporations who envisaged the extension of the county borough framework. Labour's discussion of this matter stemmed from thirty-three conferences held with various Labour local government groups. The weight of opinion lay with a reformed two-tier system of government.

¹¹¹ LPA: RDR/190, Machinery of Local Government Sub-Committee, 'Draft Report', February 1943, 6.

¹¹² LPA: LP/LG/26/12, 3.

were deemed to require the continuation of the two-tier system to maintain 'local interest' in local government affairs.¹¹³

Apart from re-affirming their support for the two-tier system, Labour's local government committee gave only marginal attention to the role of the second layer authorities. Cole, however, fully explored the interconnections between the regional and the local authorities. The creation of a regional tier, he argued, could rejuvenate the smaller local authorities by freeing them of their unachievable burdens.¹¹⁴ An alternative role could then flourish based on the development of community-inspired, neighbourhood-controlled services. Cole argued:

There is no need to repine at certain services, once locally organised, being taken under national management, where technical or administrative considerations make largeness of scale or uniformity of treatment desirable. There are plenty of things left for the local communities, of all sizes, to do for themselves, including both things that are now being done inadequately and yet more that are not being done at all.

Indeed, these new tasks were the foundations of the new participatory democracy since:

A large community cannot be democratic as a whole unless it is democratic in its functioning parts. It must give people plenty of chances of taking part in reasoning over small things which do really matter to them, in order to get the right active citizens coming out of the people for the larger things, and in order to get the rest of the people more capable of understanding - which is mainly a matter of wanting to understand - the larger things.¹¹⁵

Cole did not deny the failings of the small units of local government as they existed, yet crucially, he refused to attribute this failure to the citizens. The problem lay in the fact that the lesser local authorities had increasingly become the repository for delegated tasks. Their autonomy, and the sense of initiative which derived from it, had largely been lost. It could be revived, however, with the creation of 'neighbourhood units', animated with 'a feeling of local solidarity', to administer tasks which reflected the needs and

¹¹³ LPA: RDR/190, 6.

¹¹⁴ Town planning and hospital provision were among the most common illustrations of the unrealistic nature of local government responsibilities under the existing system. For the difficulties of town planning see below, chapter 5.

¹¹⁵ Cole Papers A1/32/10, G.D.H.Cole, 'Community-making', speech given at Fabian Lunch, 26 February 1945, 3.

aspirations of the local area, be they the creation and management of health centres, community centres, village meeting halls, or drama, games and music clubs.¹¹⁶ Local government, therefore, would be over-hauled from both ends: the 'school for practical citizenship' need not be lost. Indeed, it would thrive.

G.D.H. Cole's criticisms and proposals can be set within a wider ideological context; they reflect or illuminate more general attitudes felt in the Labour party and among its sympathizers. In particular, they echo the move away from the *dirigiste* rhetoric of the early 1930s, especially among the party's leadership. A softer, more individualistic discourse is in evidence, for example, from Herbert Morrison. In speeches to the party conference in 1946, 1948 and again in 1949, Morrison strongly emphasised democratic socialism's need for a participatory citizenship.¹¹⁷ The precise network of the passage of ideas remains rather elusive but echoes of Michael Young and, indeed, of others brought centre stage by the victory of 1945, are undoubtedly audible. Stephen Taylor, Morrison's PPS at the Lord President's Office from September 1947, for example, seems to have been influential in impressing the pertinence of these ideas on Morrison.¹¹⁸ A complementary strand of thought is the outlook presented at the Fabian-sponsored Buscot conferences of the late 1940s and early 1950s, of which Cole was a key member. The agenda was 'Problems Ahead'. The range of issues considered was broad and included, for example, the implications for democracy of the implementation of the nationalisation programmes, the role of voluntary groups, and the development of

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, *The Labour Party: Report of the Forty-Sixth Annual Conference, 1946*, (1946), 178; 1948, 129-131; *The Labour Party: Report of the Forty-Ninth Annual Conference, 1949*, (1949), 156.

¹¹⁸ Morrison's biographers indicate his willingness '...to give opportunities and experience to the bright young men in the party: he involved these PPS's in his work, showing them papers, asking their views, and getting them to write memoranda'. B. Donoughue and G.W. Jones, *Herbert Morrison, Portrait of a Politician*, (1973), 350. Dr. Stephen Taylor had become a M.P. in 1945. His ideas on socialism lean heavily towards the 'revision' being developed among the Fabians associated with Crosland's *New Fabian Essays* project. See, for example, LPA: RD/356, May 1950, S.Taylor, 'The Policy of Democratic Socialism. A Restatement for 1950'.

public relations in both local and central government.¹¹⁹ In general terms, the focus was the citizen, in all his or her guises, as worker, as consumer, as local inhabitant, and as voter. The publication in 1952 of the *New Fabian Essays* under the editorship of Richard Crossman stemmed from these discussions and many themes identified at Buscot are to be found in this and in later works of revision.¹²⁰

Local government reform, however, did not feature in the *New Fabian Essays*. William Robson took this omission as proof of a general 'indifference of the labour movement generally towards local government as a method of distributing power, of widening popular participation in the process of making decisions, and of enhancing freedom.'¹²¹ Robson had reason to be disappointed, for the Attlee governments' appreciation of local government was patchy and certainly fell short of the he model envisaged. Yet he was surely wrong to attribute this to a lack of awareness or interest within the Labour movement as a whole. Cole and the New Fabian circle did examine the role of local government in bridging the gap between planning and participation. This is evident from the Buscot papers. Their conclusions were positive, but overwhelmingly constrained by the enormous complexity of reform. Cole's *Local and Regional Government* offered a bold programme, but the reconstruction years, while being the optimum opportunity for reform in theory, were not the optimum time in practice.¹²²

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Cole papers, D1/14/2, R.J.Goodman, 'Active Democracy'; R. Jenkins, 'The social services and redistributive taxation'; I.Mikardo, 'Nationalisation,' Buscot Conference, 1949. Similar themes are discussed at later conferences.

¹²⁰ Crossman (ed.), *New Fabian Essays*. See proposal by G.D.H. Cole to incorporate these discussions into a volume of *New Fabian Essays*, Cole papers, D1/16/7. See also, A. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, (1956). Cole himself dropped out of the picture in 1950. According to Margaret Cole, his unhappiness with the direction of Labour foreign policy led to his alienating himself from the group which contained a number of Bevin's supporters. Margaret, however, remained to share Crossman's editorial responsibilities on the *New Fabian Essays*. This view is substantiated by Cole himself in a letter to *Fabian News*, March 1951.

¹²¹ Robson, 'Labour and Local Government', 46.

¹²² See, for example, the view of Morrison expressed during the debate over the 1945 local Government White Paper, *Parliamentary Debates*, 408, 15 February 1945, 501; Sir William Jowett, Solicitor-General, report to Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Priorities, quoted in J.B. Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning, Vol. 1: Reconstruction and Land Use Planning 1939-1947*, (1975), 50; report of conference held by the Nuffield

This is not to say, however, that the issue disappeared completely from the party's and the government's agenda. An examination of postwar discussions clearly reveal that the issue was still a live one. For example, in January 1949 Attlee appointed the Local Government Manpower Committee. While the immediate context of its appointment was a concern with expenditure on manpower¹²³, the committee clearly had a wider agenda: its terms of reference urged that particular attention be paid to 'the distribution of functions between central and local government and the possibility of relaxing departmental supervision of local authority activities and delegating more responsibility to local authorities'.¹²⁴ This was, indeed, taken to heart, with the committee stating its belief that 'the manpower problem could best be tackled in the first instance by examining the relations between Government Departments and local authorities and by considering what scope there was for reducing the extent of central control.'¹²⁵ Essentially, it concurred with its Memorandum of Guidance 'that local authorities are responsible bodies competent to discharge their own functions and that, though they may be the statutory bodies through which Government policy is given effect and operate to a large extent with Government money, they exercise their responsibilities in their own right....'¹²⁶ Its recommendations, which largely consisted of administrative procedures rather than actual legislative changes, began to be effected as soon as the first report had been published.¹²⁷ Hence this ostensibly technical examination of administrative procedures was also a site for articulation of issues of a far more fundamental nature. In

Social Reconstruction Survey, Nuffield Social Reconstruction Survey Archive, LG 138; Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government', 51; K. Young and P. Garside, *Metropolitan London. Politics and Urban Change*, (1982), 234-243

¹²³ See Ministry of Health circular to Local Authorities, no. 96147, June 1947.

¹²⁴ *First Report of the Local Government Manpower Committee*, Cmd. 7870, (1950), 1. The report stressed that it was primarily interested in the 'normal permanent relationships' between local authorities and central Departments rather than the 'temporary controls necessitated by the present conditions of shortage', 7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹²⁷ *Second Report of the Local Government Manpower Committee*, Cmd.8421, (1951-52), 7.

addition, during the summer of 1949 the question of local government reform came before the Cabinet. Concern that the government was liable for heavy criticism if it did not make clear its policy on local government reform in the near future provided much of the stimulus to this discussion.¹²⁸ Herbert Morrison, however, continued to press for a more positive attitude to reform: while some members of the Cabinet, notably Bevan as Minister of Health, were anxious to postpone the matter until the new Parliament, Morrison stressed the urgency of reform.¹²⁹ He asserted that it was time

to face the fact that this difficult and important problem will not be solved until some government is prepared provisionally to make up its own mind in the face of the conflicting view of the local authorities and then, after fully consulting the local authorities, to come forward with some scheme which it is ready to recommend to the country early in the new Parliament.¹³⁰

Indeed, he felt that 'in view of the substantial knowledge and experience of local government possessed by members of the present government it is particularly well fitted to prepare such a scheme.' In short, he argued, it was time for the government to 'decide its views'.¹³¹ Attlee concurred with this view. In summing up the discussion he recommended the formation of a committee of ministers to discuss the 'underlying

¹²⁸ PRO: CAB 21/3632, Norman Brook, Permanent Secretary to Cabinet Office, to Clement Attlee, 11 May 1949, Papers of the Cabinet Committee on Local Government Reform. This matter had also been discussed in the party's committee's, a speech of Churchill's which asserted Labour's intention to blight local government seems to have caused alarm and the call for action. See LPA, RD/317, 'The Reform of Local Government', October 1949.

¹²⁹ PRO: CAB 128/15, CM 34 (49), 12 May 1949. Morrison was joined by Silkin, who argued that his policies and aims for Town and Country Planning were being hindered by indecision on the reform of local government functions and boundaries, see CAB 129/34, C(49)102, 9 May 1949. The debate turned on the question of whether or not to appoint a Royal Commission to examine the issue. This device was favoured by Bevan as a delaying tactic: a means of showing that the issue was not being ignored but keeping controversy out of harm's way during the approaching general election. For Bevan's view see PRO: CAB 129/34, CP(49)82, 8 April 1949.

¹³⁰ PRO: CAB 129/34, CP(49)101, H. Morrison, 'Memorandum on local government', 4 May 1949.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

principles' which ought to govern policy on local government reform.¹³²

However, practical politics also began to stifle Morrison's desire for action. The new Parliament of 1950 was not as vigorous as that of 1945 and in this fragile political atmosphere Morrison acknowledged that Bevan's wish to avoid controversy was a sound ploy and he, too, began to see advantages in the establishment of a Royal Commission to take the heat out of local government reform.¹³³ Yet even before the general election of 1950 had rendered Labour impotent in this area, practical politics placed tight boundaries on government action. First, electoral politics demanded the immediate institution of the Beveridge promises, of houses, hospitals and schools. It became apparent that the imperative delivery of these commitments could not wait for the traumatic upheaval of local government reform. Secondly, once the economic crisis began to hit home in 1947-48, austerity measures imposed an additional pressure as a letter to Attlee on the recommendations of the Local Government Manpower Committee reveals. While it seemed that most ministers would be in favour of cutting central supervision of local authorities in many areas, there were strong countervailing economic pressures which pulled ministers towards 'tighter and closer supervision over local authorities', thus moving 'at variance with the general trend of the report which is in favour of a less meticulous and more general form of control of local affairs.'¹³⁴ In addition, on a ideological level the demands of equality, as uniformity, remained a strong influence on the party. The clearest example of this is to be found in Bevan's health service: local government ownership and control of hospitals had, in fact, been urged by Herbert

¹³² PRO: CAB 128/15, CM(49)34, 12 May 1949. With such questions of principle decided, an inter-departmental committee of officials could then proceed to fill in the details. This was duly established under Bevan's chairmanship. For its deliberations see CAB 134/470. The main tenor of its review seems to have been the acceptance, as a *fait accompli*, that many of the major services had been lost to local government. The main stress of the inter-departmental committee was the need to integrate town and country rather than to evolve a plan to regionalise in order to create a new system capable of administering nationalised industries.

¹³³ PRO: HLG 52/1220, Herbert Morrison to Hugh Dalton, 10 March 1951.

¹³⁴ PRO: CAB 21/3632, A. Johnston, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, to Clement Attlee, 11 July 1949.

Morrison on the grounds that local initiative was a sound basis for a democratic service.¹³⁵ Bevan's concern for uniformity, however, had a stronger hold, particularly when buttressed by the unwillingness of the medical profession to work under a municipal system.¹³⁶

In 1948 a reviewer of the new edition of William Robson's *The Development of Local Government*, (whilst accepting Robson's arguments that opportunities for the development of local government might be slipping away), drew attention to the impact of exogenous forces on the Labour party's attitude to local government arguing,

It is tempting to make wry fun of a Labour Government whose spiritual fathers were the gas and water Socialists of the Fabian Society, persistent advocates of the extension of municipal functions even in the most unlikely fields, but who today are robbing the Local Authorities of their powers. But the practice is a continuing one, ante-dating the present Government, and supported by all the political parties for the past eighteen years.¹³⁷

It was a pertinent point, and one with which Robson would surely have agreed, but also important was the fact that the most durable and penetrating element of Labour's wartime debate over local government reform seems to have been the stress upon community and the peacetime harnessing of the wartime spirit of local action: a message which did not necessarily require the relocation of social and economic functions from the central state to the local. Discussions on local government at the end of the 1940s instead stressed rejuvenation of local government through the closer linking of town and country and the creation of vigorous small units 'which recognised the realities of the changed patterns of community caused by transport and population changes'.¹³⁸ Indeed, Bevan's new units

¹³⁵ This, of course, had been stated Labour policy in 1943, see Labour Party, *National Service for Health*; LPA, RDR/154, Public Health Sub-Committee: 'Labour's Plan for Health', December 1942.

¹³⁶ PRO: PREM 8/288. For Bevan's viewpoint see CP(45)205, 5 October 1945 and for Morrison's attitude see CP(45)227, 12 October 1945; Dauntton, 'Payment and Participation', 207.

¹³⁷ Robson papers, press cuttings books, review of Robson's *The Development of Local Government*, (1948 edn.), 'The Crisis of Local Government', *Local Government Service*, 9, 25, September 1948.

¹³⁸ Owen, 'Regionalism and Local Government Reform', 53.

of local government were given extra permissive powers, for example, in the areas of retail distribution, hotels, laundry and taxis. It was a vision of local government, Owen argues, 'based not upon the Fabian tradition of municipal industry but on the consumption services, the washing basket and the food hall'.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, this was also a vision which welcomed and, indeed, intended to promote active citizenship. It was a local government of health and arts centres, the hub of a socially responsible community life which extended outwards to, and was the 'indispensable partner' of, the national government.¹⁴⁰

Planning and participation were not mutually exclusive aims for socialism: indeed many socialists sought their combination. But they were uncomfortable, if not strictly incompatible, partners in practice. William Robson was right: the policies of the Attlee government were inconsistent with regard to local government. However, he was surely wrong to attribute this to a lack of interest within the Labour movement. He himself noted the efforts of the Co-operative party to foster discussion on the issue at their annual conferences of 1952 and 1953.¹⁴¹ He hoped this interest was the beginning of a new sensitivity to local government. The discussions and debates examined here, however, suggest that this had been present throughout the period, though it only becomes clear by looking at the ideas which lay behind policy formation while according recognition to the real and powerful hindrances to their implementation. The example of local

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ LPA RD/5, 'Local Government, the Indispensable Partner', draft for pamphlet for the Labour Party Educational Series, October 1945. See also LPA GS/LG/10 i-vi, 'The Labour Party and Local Government', (n.d., c.1950); GS/lg/11 i-iii, M. Phillips, 'Labour and Local Government', (nd. c. 1950). Local authorities, for example, were given powers under the 1948 Local Government to spend 6d from the rates to provide entertainment for their citizens. The 1947 Civic Restaurants Act allowed local governments to provide refreshment services, taking over the British Restaurants established in 1941. Local authorities were also encouraged to build Arts Centres for their citizens. See R. Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion. The Formulation of English National Identity, 1939-1956', (University of London, unpublished PhD thesis, 1995), chapter 2. Moreover, the 1948 Children Act required local authorities to provide homes for neglected and parentless children.

¹⁴¹ Robson, 'Labour and Local Government', 52.

government, therefore, has a wider relevance to our understanding of the Labour party. It reveals how an examination of the articulation and development of ideas can be a useful balance to examinations of policy decisions. Without this attention, in this and in other areas, the history of the labour movement is likely to be misread.

5

REDISTRIBUTION AND REGENERATION: TOWN PLANNING AND THE COMMUNITY

The Labour party, as the last chapter argued, was acutely aware of the problems of local government and of the implications that these raised for democracy and citizenship. Many influential figures within and around the party claimed that the local state, in closer communication with the ordinary citizen, must play a significant part in social and economic organisation. However, the fundamental difficulty of finding the means to fuse the party's wish for local diversity and initiative with its strong desire for a nationally beneficial economic plan and a national standard of social service, impeded the articulation of clear and comprehensive answers. Nevertheless, interest and even action on these awkward questions of the right balance between the central and local state, and between the state and civil society, did emanate from party circles. Town planning and land policies, in particular, encountered and attempted to deal with this issue. Town and country planning, for example, was frequently used by contemporaries to illustrate the necessity of reworking the fabric of local government structure and finance. Moreover, this area of policy raised major questions about the nature of the state's claim on the nation's resources, and reflected the party's tensions as it attempted to tease out a workable statement and programme as to how such claims could be executed within a democratic and accountable framework.

In the 1920s and 1930s politicians, academics and other interested social commentators evolved a generally accepted planning rationale, characterised by the commitment to the decentralisation of industry and people away from congested city centres, particularly London, and the restriction of growth at the suburban fringes. The strategy had adherents from across the political spectrum as the list of patrons of the Town and Country Planning Association, the chief publicizing agency of this stance, testifies.¹ The Labour party was connected to this viewpoint through the TCPA's secretary, Frederic Osborn. Osborn was an active member of the Fabian Society and the

¹ See Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns*.

Labour party and he spent much of the later 1930s and 1940s advocating this strategy of planned decentralisation to the party and the nation. With the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, the Barlow report, the basis of a planning consensus was forged.² The central tenets of the shared viewpoint that had emerged by 1941 urged the active pursuit of the decentralisation of the nation's industry and industrial population, through the medium of a national planning policy. This was to be executed by a national planning authority, regional planning authorities and the localities, by limiting the growth of large towns through a firm green-belt policy and by the development of new and existing towns.³

However, the issue was not without dissension. The basic concept of urban decentralisation was generally agreed, but the extent of this decentralisation was a contested issue. On an even more fundamental level, there was severe disagreement on the scope of the state's role in the planning of land use. While town planning and the control of land use had received an enormous political boost by the pro-planning atmosphere of the mid-1930s, with 'middle opinion' endorsing the economic and social rationality of basic planning measures, the limited nature of this consensus soon became apparent as is, perhaps, demonstrated in the very narrow description of physical planning by Political and Economic Planning in 1942. PEP, which had been advocating the need for town planning since its establishment in 1931, suggested that physical planning had a 'two-fold task': first, 'securing the right use of the land of the country for all purposes' and second, 'securing that the right buildings (in the widest sense) are provided in the right places'. The language is that of efficiency; there is little sense of any redistributive aims within this mainstream definition.⁴ Yet, discussions on town formation and reformation raised much wider issues concerning the scope of state action in the redistribution of socially-created value and are, therefore, a significant barometer for contemporary ideas on community and citizenship as they explicitly confront fundamental

² *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*, Cmd. 6153, (1940).

³ See F.S. Towndrow, (ed.), *Replanning Britain, being a summarized report of the Oxford Conference of the Town and Country Planning Authority*, Spring 1941, (1941). See, also, P.Hall, (ed.) *The Containment of Urban England*. Vol. 1, (1973), 91-113.

⁴ PEP, 'Plans for Physical Reconstruction', *Planning*, 198, 22 December 1942, 2.

principles of democracy and government responsibility and accountability.

In order to examine these issues, this chapter will contemplate the land and town planning policy debates of c.1940-51 and, in particular, Labour's reactions and initiatives in this field. The contextual framework was largely set by the Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt reports which gave form and official sanction to the aim of decentralisation and were viewed as the general basis for any future policy.⁵ The key policy debates which emanated from this context, and which will form the main substantive part of this chapter include the Coalition government's Town and Country Planning Act of 1944, the White Paper on the Control of Land Use of the same year, and the Labour government's Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The 1946 New Towns Act and the 1949 National Parks Act were also part of this debate. A series of technically complex investigations thus issued a political debate of potentially enormous significance. Fundamental issues were exposed. In particular, the role of the central and local (and regional) government in post-war planning, land ownership and development and their relationship to one another was at issue. This debate took a number of forms, including the loci of planning initiative and of ultimate sanction; the mechanism for the transmittance of policy decisions into practice; and the scope and form of compensation and betterment.

The Labour party was officially committed to a strategy of decentralisation: indeed it had been since 1918 when the January party conference had unanimously resolved that the bulk of future building ought to be 'diverted into new towns of limited size and in permanent contact with country life.'⁶ Herbert Morrison, too, gave support to this strategy. Morrison had been a conscientious objector in the First World War and spent 1917-18 as a market gardener at Letchworth where he became attracted to the satellite plan for decentralisation. He advanced its cause to the London Labour Party and

⁵ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*; Ministry of Works and Planning, *Report of the Committee on the Utilisation of Rural Areas*, Cmd. 6378, (1942); Ministry of Works and Planning, *Interim and Final Reports of the Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment*, Cmds. 6291 and 6386, (1940-41).

⁶ E. Ormiston [F.J.Osborn], 'The Public Control of the Location of Towns', *Economic Journal*, 28, 112, (1918).

by 1920 it too had declared firmly for dispersal. Morrison contributed an essay to *Garden Cities and Town Planning* advocating satellite towns to ease London's population and industrial congestion.⁷ It became an election issue in 1923, featuring in the London Labour Party pamphlet, *Toryism: The Ratepayers' Enemy*.⁸ By the time Labour won control of the London County Council in 1934, their standpoint was well versed and the following year their commitment to this strategy had firm evidence in the inauguration of the outer London Green Belt.⁹ It was also from London, though, that the complexities of the issue began to find expression. The Labour group on the council began to show signs of uncertainty in the face of large-scale decentralisation.¹⁰ The issue had serious strategic repercussions for London government. The Second World War and the need for wide reconstruction of the inner London area brought the matter to a head and pushed the issue onto a far larger stage.

The implementation of a firm policy of industrial and population decentralisation imposed serious consequences on the nature, structure and financial viability of local authorities. Locating industrial and retail activity within the city centre was a profitable strategy for local authorities in terms of the collection of rates for its coffers. Suburban housing development had brought similar benefits but with the greater restrictions of the 1935 Ribbon Development Act this was an increasingly closed option. By way of contrast the building of out-county housing estates or satellite town developments would diminish the authorities' rateable value. This issue raised a plethora of complicated issues. It brought to the fore questions of regional and national planning, and as such posed local

⁷ H. Morrison, 'A New London. Labour's View of the Satellite Towns', in *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, May, (1920).

⁸ GLRO: Acc 2417/A/9, H. Morrison, *Toryism: The Ratepayers' Enemy. A Labour View of Municipal Finance and Public Economy*, (1923).

⁹ A. Saint, (ed.), "'Spread the People": The LCC's Dispersal Policy 1889-1965', *Politics and the People of London. The L.C.C. 1889-1965*, (1980), 226-7.

¹⁰ This doubt within London was significant since the Barlow agenda had set a great deal of strategic importance on the decentralisation of the capital. The tension over the reconstruction of London was able to feed on the growing differences of opinion within the town planning movement. Since the mid-1930s the garden city ideal faced competition from advocates of more concentrated central redevelopment. See J. Yelling, *Slums and Redevelopment*.

authority autonomy with a serious challenge. In 1938, W.A. Robson pointed out the complexities of this issue:

...The London County Council has itself decided that it will not undertake the building of satellite towns in present circumstances, and so apparently have practically all other English towns...the facts themselves point to the undesirability, or at any rate, inexpediency, of local authorities spending money and effort to colonise areas over which they have virtually no control from the local government point of view.¹¹

The issue came to a climax in 1943 around the time of the publication of Patrick Abercrombie's LCC commission, the *County of London Plan*. In the later 1930s Abercrombie had proved himself an 'unabashed advocate of dispersal'.¹² He was, for example, the author of a Minority Report for the Barlow Commission, which stressed the need for a national plan for decentralisation. According to Andrew Saint, in accepting Abercrombie as 'a consultant with wide powers, a broad brief, and no requirement to talk to union leaders or industrialists, the LCC's leaders were acquiescing in a plan which was bound to recommend a large measure of planned dispersal.'¹³ However, the finished proposals while endorsing dispersal were notably conservative in the numbers concerned. Osborn was undoubtedly disappointed by its recommendations asserting, 'It talks the language of "decentralisation" and plans to slow up the process as much as possible'. He pin-pointed the blockage as 'the drift of opinion in the LCC'.¹⁴ He poured out his disillusionment at the conservative estimate of numbers to be dispersed to Abercrombie himself: 'I foresaw that the balance of forces being what they are - no Government policy, County Hall impenitent for the mad policy of 1919-39, and the London public sound asleep - a compromise too low down was likely....I feel this Report should have been the banner for planning, and compromises and expediences should have come later.'¹⁵ In a letter to Sir Montague Barlow he noted that the LCC, and other large

¹¹ Frederic Osborn Archive (hereafter FOA): B.125. W.A. Robson to Frederic Osborn, 8 June 1938.

¹² Saint, "'Spread the People'", 228.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁴ FOA: B1, Frederic Osborn to Patrick Abercrombie, 5 April 1943.

¹⁵ FOA: B1, Frederic Osborn to Patrick Abercrombie, 19 July 1943.

municipal authorities such as Birmingham, were against industrial decentralisation ‘...for reasons of rateable value’ and ‘London also because of the fear of the LCC of losing electors and weakening the chance of getting a Greater London Regional Planning Authority controlled by the Labour caucus.’¹⁶ He reiterated this second point in a letter to G.D.H.Cole, seeing in it the reason why ‘the LCC, under Labour control, follows a reactionary policy...I regard it as tragic, especially in view of the advanced line the Labour Party took on planning during the election which put it in power in 1934.’¹⁷

At the centre of the issue was the problem of compensation and betterment for the shifting of land values by town and country planning. This issue was clearly recognised as the foremost stumbling block to good planning, yet the state had resolutely failed to create a watertight and comprehensive system. The 1932 Town Planning Act provided a framework for dealing with the issue but it was a complex and ultimately fragile structure, lacking the strength to ensure full execution. Local authorities, therefore, had long been grappling with the practical difficulties of planning without a comprehensive compensation and betterment system.¹⁸ In essence, planning authorities in the interwar years, small-scale and independent, were inhibited in their decision-making by the need to compensate owners when restricting the development potential of land. The result, Lewis Silkin argued, was the ‘prevention of really bold and imaginative schemes’ with local authorities tending ‘to take the line of least resistance and to prepare schemes which involve the minimum risk of compensation, generally based on the existing uses of land.’¹⁹ Although the 1932 Act provided for the recovery of betterment from ‘owners whose property was increased in value as a result of a scheme or of work

¹⁶ FOA: B14, Frederic Osborn to Sir Montague Barlow, 8 June 1944, (not sent).

¹⁷ FOA: B36, Frederic Osborn to G.D.H.Cole, 14 January 1944. This comment demonstrates something of the complexity of Labour’s position in London.

¹⁸ F.J. Osborn, ‘Britain’s Town-Country Pattern: The Report of the Royal Commission’, *Political Quarterly*, 1940, 229.

¹⁹ L.Silkin, *The Nation’s Land*, Fabian Research Series, no. 70, (1943), 9. See also, FOA: E21, Memorandum of Town Planning Institute, November 1940. This had undoubtedly been the aim of the LCC during the mid-1930s. See LCC Minutes of Meetings, 10 July 1934, Report of the Town Planning Committee, cited in P.Garside, ‘The Failure of Regionalism in 1940s Britain’ in Garside and Hebbert, *British Regionalism*, 103.

done by an Authority', it was rarely collected since in practice, Silkin argued, it was 'almost impossible to prove that the increase in value of any particular property is due solely to the making of a scheme....In only a few cases, in fact, had any betterment ever been recovered.'²⁰ Local authorities simply could not afford to fund schemes requiring heavy compensation from the rates. The old bogey of local government finance again reared its head.²¹

It is at this juncture that the contemporary debate on local government and regionalism came to the fore. Were regional authorities the solution for the administrative difficulties of an increasingly complex economic and social environment? Could regional organisation offer a rational, yet democratic means to enable the 'small man' to live in a 'big world'?

The need for larger local government areas had been discussed for a number of decades before the Second World War amplified the problem. Local government finance was a customary component of this debate by the 1920s; the inelasticity of local government finance being used as an argument for the necessity of larger areas of local government.²² The key issue at the time had been the desirability of distributing the rates burden over a wide and heterogeneous area but the structural issue had been left unsolved.²³ The war now intervened and again made the issue live. Bomb damage intensified the argument for the decentralisation of population and industry, yet if this scheme was to have any effect compensation and betterment questions could not be ignored. The proper size and structure of planning authorities became central issues since the authority would have to cope with large-scale readjustment of land values. In addition, if the Barlow Report's strategy was to be endorsed, it would also have to accommodate a nationally beneficial plan. The relationships between local authorities,

²⁰ Silkin, *The Nation's Land*, 9.

²¹ See above, chapter 4, pages 135-41.

²² See above, chapter 4. For an indication of the chronological spread of this argument see, for example, H.G. Wells's statement of 1902, 'Locomotion and Reorganisation', and Regionaliter [W.A. Robson], *Regional Government*, (1942).

²³ The 1929 solution had been the extension of Treasury grants-in-aid rather than a large-scale overhaul of local government areas. See above, pages 140-41.

between local and central government, and between state and citizen, were centrally affected by these discussions.²⁴

The points raised in the microcosm of London by Robson and Osborn were now thrown onto the national stage. The established local government planning authorities, Silkin argued, suffered from parochialism: 'the existing conception of town planning is a purely local one', since it was a natural tendency for planning authorities, 'each responsible...to local bodies of electors', to consider questions of planning and development largely with a view to the effect they will have on the Authority's own finances and the trade of the district.'²⁵ Thus, it might prefer to 'zone areas for middle-class dwellings, which from a rateable point of view are more remunerative, rather than for working-class dwellings, which it may consider a financial liability, even though working-class dwellings may be more appropriate and necessary.' However, the matter had broader consequences than this:

...proposals by landowners involving the further development of an existing urban area are not likely in practice to be refused when the only reason against the development is that, from a national standpoint, its proper location is elsewhere - especially as the prevention of any such development might not only involve the Authority in liability to pay heavy compensation but would, in addition, deprive it of substantial increases in rate income.²⁶

The housing reformer Sir Ernest Simon recognised that attempts to solve the problems of town planning involved major issues and, indeed, required radical changes, arguing

We need economic reform; the whole question of town planning is crushed under the burden of compensation to private interests. We need political reform; both central authorities and local authorities are wrongly constituted and have inadequate powers. We need spiritual reform; we need a new enthusiasm and determination to build fine and beautiful cities.²⁷

²⁴ See, for example, FOA: E18, F.J.Osborn, talk on Land Values, 10 February 1941.

²⁵ Silkin, *The Nation's Land*, 6. This was in fact Frederic Osborn's criticism of Silkin's LCC.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ E.D. Simon, 'Town Planning: Moscow or Manchester?' *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 23, (1937), 381-89. Simon, a Manchester Liberal, moved with the Liberal intellectual elite in the interwar, and served, briefly, as parliamentary secretary to the

Fundamental questions, therefore were raised by this debate: who was to decide the tenor and the detail of town planning policy? How could its execution be ensured? Major questions of responsibility and accountability were at issue and flooded into the national political debate. A highly complicated and technical issue had opened up plethora of basic political questions. If Silkin's argument of the inherent parochialism of local authorities was true (and it certainly rang true to many professional planners of the day), then what authority was to have planning control?²⁸ If the solution was to remove planning policy from the local authorities, from where should it emanate instead; from a regional body of some sort, or from the centre? Moreover, what would be the impact of these administrative revisions on the citizen?

The idea of a national plan for physical reconstruction was not new. It had an established pedigree dating at least from the mid-1930s. The research group PEP identified the need for national planning in 1933, arguing that the 1932 Town Planning Act had revealed the deficiencies of planning on a lesser scale and had resulted in 'chaotic and wasteful development', by public or semi-public bodies such as transport, water and sewerage authorities as much as by private enterprise.²⁹ The Fabian society also argued for a national planning policy based on industrial location.³⁰ Much of the impetus for a national plan was drawn from the plight of the distressed areas in the early 1930s, though Dennis Hardy has argued that the impact of this rising interest was not widely felt until 1937.³¹

Minister of Health in Ramsay MacDonald's pre-election 'National' government. He joined the Labour Party in 1946. He received a peerage in 1947, becoming Baron Simon of Whythenshawe.

²⁸ F.J.Osborn, for example, wrote clearly and sympathetically on the problems associated with municipal ownership in his article, 'Compensation and all that...', Part II, *Town and Country Planning*, 9, 1941, 103.

²⁹ PEP, 'Town and Country', *Planning*, 2, May 1933, 8.

³⁰ See Fabian Society Archives, J27, papers of the Territorial Planning Committee of the NFRB, (c.1934).

³¹ Hall, (ed.), *The Containment of Urban England*, 105-6; S.Ward, *The Geography of Interwar Britain: The State and Uneven Development*, (1988); H. Warren and W.R.

The idea was most forcefully expressed in the reports of the Barlow Commission, particularly in the Minority Report authored by Abercrombie.³² As this idea took hold, amongst the Labour party but also wider afield, the limitations and potential biases of local authorities were thrown into relief.³³ A nationally beneficial plan would involve considerable decentralisation of industry, both from the inner city areas and, on a wider scale, from the south and midlands to the north and Wales. However, this would also involve some local authorities in heavy losses, just as Silkin outlined. The debate proceeded with this in mind: ought local authorities have the ultimate say in the planning of their areas? The Conservative Lord Balfour of Burleigh thought not, and introduced this point into the House of Lords debate on planning and reconstruction. Balfour favoured 'a central body' to control land use, believing that local authorities would not be able to act in a sufficiently detached manner:

How can these urban authorities be expected to take a perfectly impartial and disinterested view of these proposals? [of the location of industry] Of course these local authorities, attaching importance as they must do, without any natural wickedness, to rateable value, must be apprehensive of national control. National control may involve very considerable changes. Take the Port of Hull. Supposing it was decided that it was unwise to have Hull as a very large port in the future ... you cannot expect the city authorities of Hull gleefully and gladly to acquiesce in the cutting down of their port to one of diminutive importance. The sphere of local authorities in town and country planning is the administration of the Acts, not the settlement of national principles of economic, industrial, and agricultural reconstruction. Let them be supreme in their own sphere, and

Davidge, *Decentralisation of Population and Industry: A New Principle in Town Planning*, (1930) and 'The Idea of a National Plan', an editorial in *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, 19, 4, April 1929, both cited in D. Hardy, 'Regionalism in Interwar Britain', in Garside and Hebbert, *British Regionalism*, 87-8. Hardy links the stronger calls for a national plan from the TCPA to the arrival of F.J. Osborn as the association's honorary secretary. For a statement of the TCPA's new approach see F.J. Osborn, 'Planning is Possible: The Missing Link in National Policy', *Town and Country Planning*, 5, 18, March 1937, 39-42.

³² See, for example, F.J. Osborn, 'Britain's Town-Country Pattern', 230-1.

³³ Following the establishment of the Barlow Commission, Clement Attlee endorsed the work of the TCPA and praised its role in raising the profile of the question of national planning. In this he was supported by other prominent Labour figures, for example, Arthur Greenwood and John Parker. See *Town and Country Planning*, 6, 23, March 1938, 25-30 quoted in Hardy, 'Regionalism in Interwar Britain', 89.

the role they have to play is important, but Heaven help us if national policies are to be decided through the spectacles of the local authorities.³⁴

In articulating this view Balfour was backed by the veteran land reformer Lord Wedgwood:

Do you think the local council would have allowed my particular firm to leave Stoke-on-Trent if they could have stopped it from doing so? Of course they will not wish any of their ratepayers to settle in the country if they can prevent it. Their main interest is in keeping the their population, getting it fresh industries, keeping the rates down, keeping the people packed in the towns. No change there.³⁵

If individual local authorities were unable, through the limitation of size, to counteract their compensation expenditure with betterment receipts, would joint authorities or regional bodies be able to do so in a way compatible with good national planning? William Robson was a strong advocate of regional planning seeing it as 'the fundamental middle link between national planning on the one hand and local planning on the other.'³⁶ Regionally-based town planning would, for example, offer one solution to the frailties of the municipal structure, namely the unnatural administrative division of town and country: regional organisation would allow communities to plan and acquire the land both inside and outside the existing borders of the town, so that co-operation between the needs of the town and of country would be more likely to flourish.³⁷ The debate on regional planning policy, however, raised an awkward and common problem of the regionalists' strategy, that is, the composition of the regional body and its relationship with other organs of democratic government and with the citizen? How and to whom was it to be accountable? What was to be its field of responsibility; was it to be an ad hoc creation or a separate tier of government, elected as a multi-purpose authority in its own right?³⁸ These political complications aside, the advocates of the

³⁴ *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Lords, 125, 18 November 1942, 155.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

³⁶ FOA: B125, W.A.Robson to F.J.Osborn, 8 November 1942.

³⁷ FOA: B125, W.A.Robson to F.J.Osborn, 23 May 1941. G.D.H.Cole had made similar points in an article of 1926, 'A Plea for Regionalisation', *Local Government News*, October 1926, 78.

³⁸ See above chapter 4, pages 146-52, 158-60.

regional solution found it difficult to insert themselves into the centre of the land control debate.³⁹ The regional approach was not seen as able to solve the main planning problems exhibited under municipal control. While regional organisation would allow for the rough equalisation of the expenditure on compensation and the income from betterment, it could extend only to those transfers which took place within the same region. The experience of industrial development in the 1920s and 1930s and the painful legacy of the distressed areas, however, were reminders enough that intra-regional planning was insufficient. It was 'a national problem since the displacement of value by planning' could not 'be assumed to occur wholly within a development area', whether that area be of one local authority, the area of a whole urban agglomeration, or the region.⁴⁰

If the central authority was the right locus for the ultimate sanction of planning decisions, as the weight of argument seemed to be suggesting by the 1940s, what mechanism ought to be employed to effect its resolutions? The Barlow Report had introduced this question into the debate in 1937. It was highly contested issue: disagreement over the form the central planning authority was to take was the main precipitating factor for the Commission's minority report. The Labour Party similarly stressed the importance of this question: its Central Committee on Reconstruction Problems stating that 'this is a fundamental question - whether the reshaping of the industrial life of the country is to be undertaken by an appointed Board or with full ministerial responsibility....'⁴¹ In addition, the format of the central authority became a key area of debate following the publication of the Uthwatt Report.⁴² Lord Balfour, for example, corresponded with Frederic Osborn on this matter outlining his aversion to placing ultimate planning sanction under the control of the Treasury. While 'the local

³⁹ See, for example, Garside, 'The Failure of Regionalism in 1940s Britain'. Advocates of regionalism perhaps had more impact upon the direction of health care policy, but as Webster argues, there were many different visions of a regional solution which often explicitly contradicted each other, 'Conflict and Consensus'.

⁴⁰ FOA: E16, F.J. Osborn, 'Final draft of TCPA.'s evidence to the Uthwatt Committee', March 1941.

⁴¹ LPA: RD/136, Central Committee on Reconstruction Problems, 'Postwar Planning Machinery', October 1942.

⁴² PEP, 'Plans for Physical Reconstruction', *Planning*, 198, 22 December 1942, 12-3.

authority will not adopt the right planning policy...unless they have financial help', he argued, 'the Treasury, on past experience will be too prone to want to make a profit.' His solution was a Commission, 'the full far-sighted trusteeship idea which is alone compatible with a proper planning policy.'⁴³ This consideration featured strongly in the Lords debate on the Uthwatt report. Balfour here argued that the Civil Service would hinder the planning programme:

Most civil servants, in my experience, are anti-planners, the reason being that planning involves interference with Departmental routine. Every civil servant wishes his own Department to be perfect, and believes it can do things better than any other Department...For that reason I greatly prefer to a Department the machinery recommended by Mr. Justice Uthwatt [that is, a Commission].

Others thought differently. Viscount Sankey for example, expressed his concern with the idea of an executive commission believing that a parliamentary-based solution was more conducive to the democratic control of planning:

That there must be some central authority is beyond argument, but in a movement which is in a large measure to alter and regulate our national life, it is devoutly to be wished that Parliament in some degree will retain its control, and will not hand over national planning to the uncriticized discretion of a single Minister, or a Commission....Still less should Parliament permit a procedure by which decisions can be reached behind a smoke screen of officials, who, impartial and efficient as they undoubtedly are, are inexperienced in such matters, and hampered by a system which is entirely unfitted for such a task. If we are to be planned, let us be planned in the light. We do not countenance a State in which planning and control are centralised in a few hands, and where the fundamental distinction in society is between the few who control and plan and the many who are controlled and planned....If we are too much governed, we shall forget how to govern ourselves.⁴⁴

This view was supported by the Government which, in the less effuse words of the Labour Minister without Portfolio, Sir William Jowitt, had 'come to the conclusion that in a matter so vitally concerning the lives and interests of everyone in the country the fullest measure of direct responsibility to Parliament must be maintained.'⁴⁵

Yet by 1944 there was no concrete planning structure in place. Fundamental issues

⁴³ FOA: B, Balfour to F.J.Osborn, 15 September 1943.

⁴⁴ *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Lords, 125, 18 November 1942, 165-6.

⁴⁵ Quoted in PEP, 'Plans for Physical Reconstruction', 13.

of policy remained open and extremely contentious. The Coalition government's attempt at legislating for town and country planning revealed the depth of disagreement.⁴⁶ In translating the issues into policy the government dealt first with the most modest of the issues raised by the Uthwatt committee. Under the terms of the 1944 Town and Country Planning Bill the planning powers of local authorities were extended and tightened up and provision was made for special, expedited compulsory purchase powers for local authorities in war-damaged and, to a less generous degree, to blighted areas.⁴⁷ In many ways, the Act was designed as a 'once and for all solution to what W.S. Morrison called 'the novel and formidable problem' of the bombed city.⁴⁸ It did not spell out a commitment to long-term and comprehensive planning.⁴⁹ Moreover, the measure left many issues unresolved, leaving open such questions as the creation of an independent planning authority, the amount of compensation to be paid to landowners for the loss of development rights, the amount the state was to take in betterment recoupment: questions which centrally affected the role of local and central government in post-war planning, land ownership and development. Lewis Silkin described the bill as 'a miserable and mean measure which represents a victory by the landowning interests over the public interest.' He went on to argue that 'if the Labour party accepts it, even in principle, it will be guilty of having betrayed the hopes of all who have placed their trust in our movement....It will have passed a sentence of death upon comprehensive planning for many a generation to come.'⁵⁰ These were strong words, indeed, considering Labour

⁴⁶ In the view of Michael Foot, 'the question of the ownership of the land was the real rock on which the Coalition was broken.' See M. Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol.1, 474; Addison, *The Road to 1945*, (1982 edn.), 252-3. See also, B. Pimlott, (ed.), *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, (1986), 22 October 1944, 796; speech of Lewis Silkin on Town and Country Planning Bill, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol.401, 12 July 1944, 1747.

⁴⁷ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning, Vol. 1: Reconstruction and Land Use Planning, 1939-1947*, (1975), 14-15.75-77, 89-91.

⁴⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 401, 11 June 1944, 1592.

⁴⁹ Garside, 'The Failure of Regionalism in 1940s Britain', 107-8.

⁵⁰ Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol 1., 472. Silkin was supported in the Commons debate by Arthur Greenwood, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 401, 11 July 1944, 1616.

ministers *had* already accepted the measure.⁵¹ It is important to note the rhetoric of Silkin's statement. He regarded this compromise measure as tainted because it failed to ensure that the public interest would be the prime arbiter of policy. The interests of the few were still to thwart the interests and needs of the nation as a whole. The act was piecemeal and the half-baked 1932 system remained in force.

One key area not addressed by the 1944 Act was the crucial matter of compensation and betterment.⁵² This issue went to the heart of the political problem since it related to the state's claim on private dealings in land. The Uthwatt committee, expert (and thus as impartial as possible) in its composition, and technical in its approach had, nevertheless, set a radical agenda. Its search for a solution opened up that most tender of policy areas, the state's involvement in the private land market. Its recommendations, though agonizingly technical, were politically startling. The committee argued that comprehensive development required cutting 'through the tangle of separate ownership and boundary lines' of the current system.⁵³ Outright nationalisation was seen as politically (that is, electorally) and administratively unworkable, but the committee did suggest vesting development rights in the state. While not threatening to nationalise land, the proposal to nationalise the development rights was enough to raise the fears of many landowners. For example, Lord Brockett of the Property Owners' Protection Society, in a letter to the Reconstruction Committee, expressed 'the opinion that some of the recommendations of the Uthwatt Committee go far beyond the committee's terms of reference as an expert committee. If given statutory effect they will prove to be a fatal deterrent to individual initiative, thrift and enterprise and will reproduce serious political controversy'.⁵⁴ Serious political clashes were forecast and duly ensued. The debate was an important one. It focused on proposals for compensation and betterment, that is, at

⁵¹ The Bill's sponsors included Attlee. According to Foot, the party was severely wrenched by this dilemma. Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, 472; Garside, 'The Failure of Regionalism in 1940s Britain', 108.

⁵² This was addressed in the Coalition Government's White Paper, *The Control of Land Use*, Cmd. 6537, (1944). The White Paper was not debated in the House of Commons.

⁵³ *Final Report of the Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment*, (1941).

⁵⁴ PRO: PREM 4/92/9.

what level should the state compensate land owners whose land was acquired for public and community purposes; and whether or not, and at what level, the state should seek to collect increases in land values created by private capital or government action.⁵⁵

Party views on these issues related closely to general views on the right of the state to interfere with individual property rights and the free operation of the land market. W.S. Morrison's statement to the Reconstruction Committee 'that the public control of land need no longer be regarded as a doctrinal issue for discussion on the basis of justice or injustice to particular sections of the community' but '...had become a matter of "hard practical necessity"' fell on ears deafened by the acute political implications of the issue.⁵⁶ The compensation issue was a case in point. The Uthwatt committee recommended compensating landowners of 'dead ripe' land for the loss of development rights from a global fund.⁵⁷ Undeveloped land that was needed for public or private development was to be compulsorily purchased at the existing use value, set at rates applicable on 31st March 1939. The Coalition White Paper of 1944, *The Control of Land Use*, used the same rate. This choice of rate provided the context for significant, politically-motivated disagreement, both within and outside the government. Anderson, a Conservative at the Treasury, felt that landowners who had improved their land since this date should be duly compensated.⁵⁸ Other Conservatives argued that compensation should be at current land values, or at whichever was the higher. The Labour party, however, generally regarded full compensation at 1939 values as too high.⁵⁹ Others within the party were more broadly unhappy with the proposals. Ernest Bevin at the Ministry

⁵⁵ D. McKay and A. Cox, *The Politics of Urban Change*, (1979), 69.

⁵⁶ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning*, Vol.I, 110.

⁵⁷ There was a time limit of around five years during which all claims had to be made: five years was seen as a reasonable time span in which development of 'dead ripe' land might take place.

⁵⁸ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning*, Vol.I, 113-115.

⁵⁹ Local authorities and the Treasury proved their allies in this, both eager to reduce the cost of compensation. See A. Cox, *Adversary Politics and Land: the Conflict over Land and Property Policy in Post-War Britain*, (1984), 42.

of Labour was unhappy that outright nationalisation was not being sought.⁶⁰ The legal niceties and statistical details, therefore, unleashed all manner of viewpoints which were enmeshed with the fundamental political beliefs of their holders.

The Uthwatt experts were not alone in noticing that the issue of ownership encircled the compensation and betterment issue. Frederic Osborn, in notes for an article for *The Economist*, grappled with the complexities of this question in the context of planning:

One is really driven to the view that whoever plans the land should own it over the field of the plan, because fair financial adjustments are not just calculable as between one piece of land and another....If there is national planning (as there must be) then the field of financial affection is the whole country, and *something* ought to be nationalised - but what?⁶¹

The public ownership of land, so long a stated aim of Labour party policy, thus found an arena for debate in the town planning and land use discussions of the reconstruction period. However, in this reconstruction episode, as so many times before, it was discounted as an immediate practical possibility almost before it had reached centre stage. The Labour party's commitment to land nationalisation was never removed; indeed, it was reaffirmed at numerous party conferences from 1918 onwards. But it was not regarded as a practical policy, not only by the two interwar minority administrations, but also by the 1945 government. It remains to be asked, therefore, what if anything did the failure of land nationalisation mean in terms of contemporary ideas of citizenship? Cox and McKay have argued that Labour's 1947 planning solution was framed in a context of regulation rather than redistribution: while offering a coherent attack on the anti-social problems of unregulated land use, the party was 'not prepared to clash head-on with existing structures and relationships.'⁶² What were the implications of this approach? Could the Uthwatt proposals transposed, with some changes, into policy by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, achieve a similar recognition of citizens' rights, and comparable benefits to the community, as the nationalisation of land? Was the fact of ownership itself the crucial issue, or could control be achieved, by and for the

⁶⁰ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning*, Vol.1, 110.

⁶¹ FOA: C3, unpublished draft paper for *The Economist*, (n.d.), 7.

⁶² McKay and Cox, *The Politics of Urban Change*, 78.

community, in alternative ways? This is a difficult question to address since it necessitates peeling back the layers of rhetoric and political point-scoring to uncover the ideological rationale of policy. Labour's stance on the land question is particularly obtuse: the rhetoric urges the overarching importance of public ownership while prosaic policy discussion discounts it as a viable option. Where, then, did the party stand?

The development of Labour's land and planning policy reflects the complexity of its position on the state's or, rather, the community's, claim to socially-created wealth. Since 1918, the Labour party had repeatedly asserted the importance of appropriating for the community all socially-created wealth, whether from industry or from the land. Once collected, this social value could be redistributed back to the community, creating a more equitable social and economic system and empowering citizens by giving them greater freedom as consumers. However, once the debate extended beyond the realm of rhetoric to consider the political and administrative processes that could effect such a transfer of wealth and social assets, doubts were raised as to whether there were sufficient democratic controls over the state.⁶³ In debates over the adoption of a capital levy, for instance, greater empowerment was envisaged through the transference of assets to the local authorities and co-operative societies. Yet, consumer empowerment through this decentralisation of assets could compromise the rational use of resources, sacrificing efficiency and economic buoyancy. This was a serious and highly complicated issue; important for Labour both in terms of equity and democracy, yet extremely sensitive and difficult to resolve.

Land and town planning policies were centrally affected by these difficulties. The social value which accumulated through the development of land had long been recognised by Labour as belonging, as of right, to the community as a whole. Yet, almost of equally long duration was the recognition that the redistribution of this wealth raised

⁶³ This, Thompson argues, was the motivation of J.A.Hobson and the ILP's plan for *The Living Wage* of 1928. *The Living Wage*, however, was rejected at the 1928 party conference in favour of the Fabian-influenced *Labour and the Nation*. Thompson, sees this episode as signalling the defeat of the Hobsonian/ILP interest in progress through the empowerment of the consumer. Labour certainly seems to have found the question of who is to control the socially-created value, be it from land or the nationalised industries, a problematic issue, but it is perhaps too simplistic to suggest that Labour dropped exploration of this question from the later 1920s, 'Hobson and the Fabians', 216-7.

enormous and problematic questions of practical implementation. In addition, as concern escalated over the maldistribution of the physical resources of the nation in the later 1920s and early 1930s, the focus of land policy arguably narrowed, stressing land use control rather than wealth redistribution. The nationalisation of land had largely been discounted as a viable short-term policy in the mid-1920s. Hugh Dalton had been prominent in the articulation of this view, suggesting instead a policy of taxation of land values which, as an interim solution, could begin the process of recouping socially-created value for the nation. Although the nationalisation of land remained the preferred policy, Dalton argued that it would have to remain a long-term goal.⁶⁴ The arguments against the immediate adoption of land nationalisation that he had advanced to the Land Advisory Committee resurfaced during the reconstruction period: land nationalisation was likely to be expensive and politically awkward. Moreover, at least for the short-term, it was unnecessary. The publication of the Uthwatt proposals, however, again raised the prominence of the issue. The Uthwatt committee unequivocally rejected nationalisation: it was, they argued, outside their terms of reference. Nevertheless, the committee did feel the need to point out that it was the most logical and straightforward solution to the twin problems of compensation and betterment since it rendered them obsolete.⁶⁵ It went on, despite its terms of reference, to give three practical reasons why it was not a viable solution. The first was that it was politically reckless. The second reason was that it would be inconceivable for a postwar government to afford the financial costs of nationalisation with compensation. The final reason was that it would be an administrative minefield. These reasons were convincing; Frederic Osborn, for example,

⁶⁴ LPA: Land Policy (2) 1923, Dalton, 'Memoranda', 3. See also 'Memoranda', 11 June 1923 and Land Advisory Committee, 'Draft Report', 32. The party's belief in the necessity of paying compensation to the owners of nationalised land would have meant the payment of grossly inflated prices without the prior implementation of a taxation of land values policy. In addition, as Dalton argued, funds from the taxation of land values could be diverted into a land fund from which compensation payments could be drawn. Such a policy would mean that 'the landowners would in effect compensate each other, while no burden would be imposed upon taxpayers or ratepayers', Dalton, 'Memoranda', 6.

⁶⁵ *Final Report of the Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment*, para. 38d.

felt that the administrative problems alone would be virtually insuperable.⁶⁶

Not all Labour party members, though, felt that it was impractical. Silkin argued that it was no more difficult than the Uthwatt solution: 'Just as the Uthwatt Committee recommend the vesting in the State the development rights of undeveloped land on a certain day, so could all rights in all urban land be so vested.'⁶⁷ In addition, supporters of land nationalisation could take heart from the Uthwatt committee's statements. The experts on the committee had not disparaged the idea of nationalisation. Indeed, it was confirmed as the most rational answer to the problems of compensation and betterment.⁶⁸ If nothing else, it suggested that Labour was on the right track. Thus, during the Second Reading of the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act, Labour members approached the debate from this standpoint. Arthur Greenwood, a senior member and a former health minister stated, 'You cannot satisfactorily, in our view, deal with the problem of town and country planning unless you face up squarely to the issue of nationalisation versus private ownership', citing Uthwatt committee in defence of his point.⁶⁹ Lewis Silkin, the party's current town planning spokesman, reiterated Greenwood's stance.⁷⁰ For Silkin, indeed, the issue clearly had a deeper resonance than simply offering the most effective method of land use control. At the 1944 Party Conference Silkin cast the issue in the language of community rights, asserting his hope that the NEC's statement in favour of the Uthwatt solution as an immediate policy would not undermine the aim of land nationalisation, which he regarded 'as possibly the most important part of the Labour Party's Programme.'⁷¹ The rhetoric of equity and of citizen empowerment remained potent but the party leadership could make use of this language only if the issue stayed a long-term goal. Practical and immediate politics necessitated other and different moods,

⁶⁶ FOA: C3, F.J.Osborn, 'The future of Town and Country Planning', 14 November 1942.

⁶⁷ Silkin, *The Nation's Land*, 21-22.

⁶⁸ See, for example, statement by S. Pearson, *The Labour Party: Reports of Forty-Third Annual Conference*, 1943, (1943), 204.

⁶⁹ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol.401, 11 July 1944, 1614-5.

⁷⁰ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol.401, 12 July 1944, 1747.

⁷¹ *The Labour Party: Reports to the Forty-Forth Annual Conference, 1944*, (1944), 121-2.

and central among them were solidity and preparedness. The public had already chosen their banners of reconstruction by 1943: they had Beveridge as their standard and, on occasions, even this seemed chimerical.⁷² A wartime population did not only need inspiration, they also needed reassurance through the realism of their leaders. The land, while it offered politicians a fine image of nation and community, also brought enormous technical and political problems.⁷³ In the meantime the returning soldiers and their families needed houses and, not for the first time, the urgent need for houses, (and the urgent political need of being seen to be prepared to provide these houses) complicated the party's position on the land question.⁷⁴ Internal party discussions reflected this predicament; once again a division was made between an immediate policy of land-use control and the long-term aim of nationalisation.⁷⁵ By way of a justification, the committee explained the practical difficulties of nationalisation. In particular, the members stressed the importance of speed in town planning policy, a swiftness of implementation which would necessarily pre-date the development of machinery for land nationalisation. Methods for securing control of the land in the interval therefore had to be its priority.⁷⁶ The general sense of the Housing and Town Planning sub-committee is dominated by a concern that a vital opportunity to plan for the better use of the nation's land could easily be lost either by unpreparedness or by a clumsy political attitude. The

⁷² See, for example, T.Mason and P.Thompson, "'Reflections on a revolution'? The Political mood in wartime Britain', in N. Tiratsoo, *The Attlee Years*, (1991), 59-60. See also, FOA: C1, 'Town Planning and Public Opinion', Lecture for the Town and Country Planning School, 30 August 1943.

⁷³ The rhetorical power of the land issue was certainly not abandoned by Labour, but it figured only briefly when the party was in office and in the particular context of the National Land Fund clause in Dalton's 1946 budget and then again in the National Parks legislation.

⁷⁴ It seems as if the urgency of the housing predicament may have encouraged this approach for it is the Agricultural policy sub-committee rather than the Housing and Town Planning sub-committee that seems to be maintaining the party's concern for land nationalisation. See, for example, LPA: Housing and Town Planning Sub-Committee, Minutes (9), 19 January 1943.

⁷⁵ LPA: Housing and Town Planning Sub-Committee Minutes, 1941-1943. See also, RDR/106, 'The Machinery of Planning', July 1942.

⁷⁶ LPA: Housing and Town Planning Sub-Committee, Minutes (6), 19 June 1942.

vested interest in land was enormous and it had barely been touched before. The Uthwatt solution offered a remarkably radical new direction through a revision and strengthening of the powers of compulsory purchase, through the extension of local and central control of land use planning and through the nationalisation of the right to develop land. The Uthwatt recommendations themselves had 'aroused considerable hostility among the landed and other property-owning interests.'⁷⁷ The Conservative party had responded to this concern among its constituents by playing down the report. According to Calder, this endeared it to the left.⁷⁸ In addition, there was a deeply-felt sense that the matter could become extremely awkward and messy at any moment. A major opportunity for the socialisation of land use had presented itself, but it was a fragile thing, liable to be crushed by the weight of powerful interests. The party reacted accordingly. In February 1945 the Policy Committee stated, in preparation for the Annual conference,

We declare for a radical solution for the crippling problems of land acquisition and use in the service of the national plan. Labour has accepted the Uthwatt plan for dealing with compensation and betterment. Labour believes that if it is applied with determination and no undue tenderness for the susceptibilities of vested interests it can be made to work. Labour will try hard to make it work.

The party remained committed to land nationalisation. However, as this statement makes clear, it was presented more as a final resort, or, indeed a threat to unco-operative opponents, than the ultimate party aim: 'If our opponents are right - if [the Uthwatt proposals] ... cannot work - there is only one alternative, the Land for the Nation, a comprehensive programme of land nationalisation.'⁷⁹

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act was the main component in the Labour government's solution to the land problem in the context of physical reconstruction. The rhetoric surrounding its introduction carried echoes of the land question of the early 1920s, with Silkin, in the public presentation of the Bill to the House of Commons,

⁷⁷ LPA: Policy Committee, R/53, 'Comments on the Uthwatt Report', September 1943.

⁷⁸ A. Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-45*, (1992 edn.), 534.

⁷⁹ LPA: RDR/282, Policy Committee, memorandum by the chairman, H. Morrison, 'Draft Declaration of Policy for 1945 Annual Conference', February 1945. Contrast the emphasis accorded to land nationalisation in the Policy Committee's statement on the Uthwatt Report in September 1943, LPA: RD/53. See also *The Labour Party: Reports to the Forty-Fifth Annual Conference, 1945*, (1945), 9.

relating his proposal to the principle of returning to the community the increases in land values created by the community. Whilst defending the Labour Party's record in sponsoring this precept, most notably during Snowden's Chancellorship, Silkin expressed his regret that system still remained the same: 'Owners of land are still reaping the benefit of the common endeavour of its citizens. Land costs are soaring, the population is still congested in the city because the price of land is high in the suburbs...' He hoped that this impasse would now be broken, indeed, that a form of redistribution and empowerment would now occur.⁸⁰ The difficulty for Labour, however, remained the development of actual mechanisms of administration to deliver such a vision.

The 1947 Act provided for the purchase by the state of all rights to development in land. Compensation to owners would come from a global fund of £300 million. It was hoped that this once-and-for-all payment would end the compensation problem. Under the Act, the government also sought to recoup for the community all betterment created by state actions by imposing a development charge of 100% on the granting of planning permission. The charge would be paid by the prospective developer to a Central Land Board. With the compensation and betterment issue seemingly resolved, and with ultimate planning approval resting with the Minister of Town and Country Planning the impediments to good, nationally co-ordinated planning were removed and an active role for the local authorities was now encouraged. By extending the 1944 provisions beyond the blitzed areas, the 1947 system empowered local authorities to undertake positive development within their boundaries. This move was widely supported by the local authorities themselves. However, Silkin did come into conflict with the local authorities over one aspect of his proposals. Silkin argued that the problem of shifting value, which had been so damaging to planning in the past, and which was now being dealt with in the proposals for the central payment and collection of compensation and betterment, could not be properly rectified unless the centralisation of finance 'applied to shifts due to purchase as well as shifts due to planning restrictions.'⁸¹ If the local authorities were to have wider powers of purchase, the problem of shifting values would remain. The problem could in theory be solved by a system of Exchequer grants to the local

⁸⁰ *Parliamentary Debates*, 432, 29 January 1947, 951-3.

⁸¹ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning*, Vol. 1, 221-2.

authorities, but Silkin's view was that 'a direct and simpler system of [central] purchase was much to be preferred.'⁸² Put simply, the proposition entailed placing the responsibility of purchasing land which needed to be taken into public ownership in one central body - a central land board or commission.⁸³ The land could then be sold or leased to local authorities or private developers. By this means the state, through prices or rental values, would be able 'to differentiate between private developers (who would be charged market rates) and local authorities (who would be given a hidden subsidy depending on the use their land was put to).'⁸⁴ This suggestion was controversial and opposed by the representatives of the local authorities, their traditional central government defender, the Ministry of Health and by the Treasury and Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Treasury, while it conceded that 'so far as the drain upon capital resources was concerned, it was immaterial to the State whether purchase was by local authorities or by the Land Commission since in either case the capital burden would be the same and would fall on the Local Loans Fund or other central funds', felt that there was another issue at stake.⁸⁵ It brought into play questions of financial and administrative responsibility. Interest repayment to the Local Loans Fund was a charge on a local authority which ranked *pari passu* with all its loan obligations, and as such, would always be paid. In addition, although a central grant might be allocated towards this payment which would define the government's degree of participation in cost, it still left 'the local authority to gain or lose according to the prudence and efficiency of its administration.'⁸⁶ It was feared that a rent to a central land board, on the other hand, would be much more flexible, and 'in the Treasury's view, would soon tend to become merely the surrender to the Exchequer of such margin of receipts over payments (excluding interest) as the local authority *de facto* secured.'⁸⁷ Thus

⁸² *Ibid.*, 221.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁸⁴ Cox, *Adversary Politics and Land*, 91.

⁸⁵ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning, Vol. 1*, 223.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

‘either the Exchequer would be at the mercy of the local administration, or a meticulous interference and control from the centre in what was essentially a piece of local business would be involved’.⁸⁸ Ultimately, Silkin backed down and the traditional central-local financial relationship was maintained. The fact that the local authorities and their Associations were totally against the suggestion was a contributory factor to this withdrawal. The episode had revealed the enormous structural issues that lay in the path towards a system of land use planning responsive both to the needs of the localities and the nation as a whole. This issue also figured in the debate over the executive mechanism for the implementation of the New Towns legislation: a matter which similarly forced debate on the question of the central-local government relationship.⁸⁹

An analysis of the redistributive effects of the planning framework, however, needs to extend beyond the administrative details of the 1947 Town Planning Act to the wider context of Labour’s legislative programme. One significant strand in the formation of the 1947 system, and which is evident in the deliberations described above, is the fact that it was framed in the context of an altered view of the land market. A central body controlling the state of the land market through betterment levy and central purchasing was deemed unworkable and unable to fit the traditional central-local government relationship. However, it was not envisaged that the private sector would play a major role in post-war development and redevelopment anyway.⁹⁰ The body of town planning legislation created in 1946 and 1947, in combination with the controls on industrial development and building, outlined a large role for the state in planning and development as well as land values policy. The local authorities and the New Towns Development Corporations would be the chief organs of development, empowered by the 1947 legislation to purchase land without betterment being paid to owners. In addition, any

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Hall has argued that the two central pieces of town planning legislation of the 1945-51 Labour governments, the 1946 New Towns Act and the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, created a distinction ‘between the normal process of local development control’, which remained in the hands of local authorities, and ‘the deliberate creation of new communities’, which did not. Hall (ed.), *The Containment of Urban England*, 106.

⁹⁰ McKay and Cox, *The Politics of Urban Change*, 78; Hall, (ed.), *The Containment of Urban England*, 111-113.

private development that did occur would draw in betterment to the state on the granting of planning permission. Thus, although the land was not brought into full public ownership, the nation's control on land values and on development was enormously enhanced. McKay and Cox have argued that the 1947 system 'probably represents the furthest a reformist political party can go in this field in giving the state a major interest and role without threatening existing structures and relationships in a fundamental way.' As mentioned above, they suggest that the system instituted was 'confined to regulation rather than redistribution.'⁹¹ Nevertheless, the 1947 system, in combination with the 1946 New Towns Act, and the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (which is not mentioned by McKay and Cox) did contain a redistributive element, in the sense that they gave the public, through their representatives at the local and central level, the powers to order and thus redistribute the use and development of the nation's land.⁹² The dichotomy between regulation and redistribution is unduly forced in this context: to the postwar Labour party, the first offered the best available means to effect the second. Contemporary recognition of this came from the *New Statesman*: the 1947 Act, the journal argued, 'affirmed that the people have the right to decide the use of land...obstructive vested interests are to this extent swept away. This is something to be going on with. If the Bastille of Landlordism is not yet stormed, it is at least sapped'.⁹³

In addition, McKay's and Cox's analysis which is based almost wholly on the 1947 Act ignores the significance, in terms of the redistribution of the land, of the 1946 Budget. During Dalton's Chancellorship, the land again became a subject of budgetary interest.⁹⁴ In large part this resulted from Dalton's personal interests.⁹⁵ In 1946 Dalton

⁹¹ McKay and Cox, *The Politics of Urban Change*, 79.

⁹² For debates over the access to the land bill see Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 128-39.

⁹³ *New Statesman*, 33, 11 January 1947, 1-2.

⁹⁴ For earlier attempts to use the budget to effect a redistribution of socially-created Rent see Philip Snowden's Budget statement of 1931, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 251, 27 April 1931, 1411 and Vol 252, 4 May 1931, 50.

⁹⁵ Dalton had a great fondness for the British countryside. This was manifested in his frequent walking trips and his support of such organisations as the Youth Hostels Association and the Ramblers' Association.

implemented the fusion of fiscal policy and land policy that he had been advocating since the 1920s. The budget of 1946 included two, linked measures to increase the redistribution of the nation's land. First, Dalton's budget papers reiterated a desire to revitalise the Lloyd George clause which enabled land to be surrendered in lieu of death duties. Dalton had long advocated the greater use of this legislation, suggesting it to the Labour party Land Policy Committee in 1923 and the party's Policy Sub-Committee on Finance and Trade in 1933.⁹⁶ To 'fortify' this provision, the 1946 Budget provided a fund of £50 million from which to reimburse the Inland Revenue for land taken in lieu of death duties. The aim of these measures was clearly the increased redistribution of the nation's land: Dalton argued, for instance that the fund, 'might well be used to help such bodies as the National Trust, the Youth Hostels Association, the Ramblers' Association, and many such others. All these societies, the Government regards as friends of the public interest, as good supporters of the Commonwealth.'⁹⁷ Dalton's interest in the redistribution of the nation's land had been heightened by his work on the location of industry in the 1930s. During this period he began to argue for the preservation of open space. The reasons he gave, and the rhetoric he used, are important: 'It is an uncivilised community in which every inhabitant cannot, at the end of a moderate bus or tram ride from his home or place of work, reach open country, or at the end of a short walk, reach a public open space.'⁹⁸ He urged the party to embrace policies that would help break down the existing impediments to a wider, and more democratic access to the countryside. In 1946, with Labour now in power, he returned to this rhetoric. The money provided for the land fund, he argued, could be used 'to buy some of the best of our still

⁹⁶ LPA: Land Policy (2), Dalton, 'Memoranda'; Dalton Papers, 2/1, 'A Constructive Socialist Policy', (1933), 16. See also Dalton's correspondence with Philip Snowden over Snowden's refusal to accept land on the shores of Loch Lomond in lieu of death duties. Dalton viewed this refusal as a missed opportunity to develop the National Parks and thus a denial of the nation's right to free access to its land. Dalton Papers, 5/2, letter from P.Snowden to H.Dalton 28 March 1935, letter from H.Dalton to P.Snowden, 3 May 1935; PRO: T171/386, 'Budget Speech' and 'Budget Summary'.

⁹⁷ It is interesting that Dalton advocated the redistribution of this land to voluntary agencies. This is a small indication of the insufficiency of the rigidly statist analysis of the Attlee years. See chapter 6 below.

⁹⁸ Dalton Papers, 2/1, 'A Constructive Socialist Policy', 15.

unspoilt open country, and stretches of our coast, to be preserved for ever, not for the enjoyment of a few private land-owners, but as a playground and a national possession for all our people.' It would, he concluded, be 'one of the most fitting war memorials we could establish to all those who died that we might live in freedom.'⁹⁹

In more general terms, too, the Labour party of the 1940s and 1950s expressed its intention to foster redistribution through socially-controlled regulation: the issue reappears in many other policy debates besides town and country planning. Thus, the change of emphasis away from public ownership in the 1947 Act seems consistent with a large segment of the postwar party's outlook. The party, or at least the leadership, felt that public control of land, through the ownership of development rights and the periodic levy of increments, was sufficient to obtain a planning policy that would provide for the best interests of the whole nation, especially if could be combined with a fiscal strategy which set about redistributing socially-created wealth back to the community. To a large extent this reasoning in town planning and land policy was based on political expediency. A government with an overloaded legislative programme and a financial situation that called, at the very least, for realism had to proceed with firmness but also with discretion. However, an independent reasoning to this position was also recognised at the time. Frederic Osborn certainly saw this approach to land-use planning in a positive light. Osborn had frequently urged the need for a balance between the individual and the community, asserting that, 'It is vital to keep in mind that there is no "community" interest apart from the interests of persons within the community.' He saw the 1947 Bill in this light and welcomed it.¹⁰⁰ A few months later he restated his views in the context of the general direction his party was taking, holding 'With Mr Herbert Morrison that planning in a democracy cannot be merely central governance. It requires intelligent forethought at all points of activity, including individual activity, fostered by the contagion of ideas and the spread of understanding.'¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Dalton Papers, 9/2, 'Budget Speech', (1946).

¹⁰⁰ F.J. Osborn, 'Planning Comes of Age', *Town and Country Planning*, February 1947, 2.

¹⁰¹ F.J. Osborn, 'Planning in the Crisis', *Town and Country Planning*, August 1947.

From 1945 it was common to hear support from within Labour circles for a combination of both central and local planning. The local authority's role in the planning process was, indeed, enhanced by the 1947 Act with the first line of development planning and control mechanisms united under the same authority, the County or the County Borough. Central to the new system was the obligation of each authority to produce a development plan. These were to form 'the foundation of the new planning': to constitute 'a public declaration of the local planning authorities' intentions' as decided upon after rigorous 'physical, social and economic analysis of the potentialities and future requirements of each area.'¹⁰² In developing their plans, local authorities were asked to instigate social surveys using, if possible, the local knowledge of volunteers and community clubs and societies. The requirement of a detailed local plan of this nature was new, although the idea of the survey had held much currency in planning circles since the time of Patrick Geddes. The 1947 Act's *Notes on Clauses* outlined a broad remit for the survey, ranging from geological and geographical questions to sociological issues such as 'the community structure of the area.'¹⁰³ This locally-generated basis for planning and land use control would then be implemented through the Act's new provisions for the compulsory acquisition of land: 'plans would no longer be rendered abortive because the owner of land required for an important project refuses to sell.'¹⁰⁴ This was an enormous difference from the pre-war system which was essentially limited to a restrictive power.¹⁰⁵

The mixed central-local solution had significant practical benefits. The state, if it was to take over the development rights for all undeveloped land, would become

¹⁰² Cited in J.B. Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning Vol.4, Land Values, Compensation and Betterment*, (1980), 8-9; Ministry of Local Government and Planning, *Town and Country Planning, 1943-1951*, Cmd. 8204, (1951); N. Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics. Coventry 1945-60*, (1990), 39, 53-59; B.J. Collins, *Development Plans Explained*, (1951).

¹⁰³ Cited in Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning Vol.4*, 9. See above, pages 80-2, for the interest in surveys among the planning community.

¹⁰⁴ Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning Vol.4*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, the Ministry of Health's pre-war, *Notes on the Preparation of Building Schemes*, cited *ibid*.

embroiled in a mammoth task of land management. This 'bureaucratisation of the landowner function', it was feared, by Osborn amongst others, would slow up the execution of planning programmes. Osborn argued that 'the only solution is to find the absolute necessary minimum, and to preserve (indeed encourage) freedom and initiative as far down the line as possible.'¹⁰⁶ This issue is recurrent in the correspondence between Osborn and Lord Justice Scott. In 1945, with the issue left unsolved by the Coalition Government's insubstantial planning legislation, Osborn wrote, 'I lean more and more towards a central definition of standards as against a central approval of detailed plans...the spirit of central control should be that of safeguarding against temptations to the over-exploitation of sites, rather than that of imposing the ideas of what Dickens called "ninety-pounders" on responsible local managements'.¹⁰⁷ Osborn's attitude is noticeably different from the dominant progressive view of the late 1930s and early 1940s. During the period of the Barlow Commission which sat between 1937-1940 there was much talk of 'positive planning', that is for the positive national direction of planning by the central state. This strategy was contrasted with existing town planning legislation which merely told individual local authorities what was not permissible; a system which planning enthusiasts dismissed as patently ineffective. Osborn's very different stance of 1945 does not merely represent a personal retreat from this rather dirigiste approach but seems to reflect a wider shift within the party. Certainly Osborn felt he had a fellow subscriber in Herbert Morrison.¹⁰⁸ In the summer of 1946, Osborn wrote to Morrison complimenting him on a powerful conference speech at Bournemouth and to express his approval at the direction the party seemed to be taking. Osborn felt that the 'simple attitudes that were necessary when the movement was making its way to power are not only out of date, but unless developed into new attitudes of responsibility and constructiveness will become dangerous.' He continued by way of explanation,

When we started forty years ago, it was absolutely vital to assert the

¹⁰⁶ FOA: B132, F.J. Osborn to Lord Justice Scott, 21 May 1941.

¹⁰⁷ FOA: B.132, F.J.Osborn to Lord Justice Scott, 5 July 1945.

¹⁰⁸ FOA: B.95, F.J.Osborn to G. McAllister (Labour MP for Ruthaglen and fellow TCPA member), 25 February 1950.

principle of the extension of government into new spheres, including both social security and public ownership. But we are coming into sight of a necessity of reasserting the principle of personal and group enterprise without which society will stagnate and die; and I very much hope that assertion will come from inside the Labour party, now that there is no question of the supremacy of the social interest.¹⁰⁹

By the end of the decade a number of voices expressed an interest in the effect of the new planning mechanisms on citizenship and democracy. This interest was not merely concerned with the town planning mechanisms but involved the evaluation of the whole planning milieu. As previous chapters have demonstrated such a questioning developed within the Labour party from the later 1930s and strengthened during the Second World War.¹¹⁰ In the postwar years Michael Young, who became the head of the Party's Research Department and Secretary of the Policy Committee in 1945 following a period as the Secretary of PEP, continued to explore this vein.¹¹¹ Young had inaugurated a similar evaluation process for PEP through its 'Active Democracy' discussion group. The aim of the group was to examine the implications for an active democracy of the newly formed or reformed social services.¹¹² The intention was to raise awareness of the potential contradictions between planning and freedom in a democracy in the hope that in its translation into practice democratic planning would 'choose a form which is least likely to allow power to turn the citizens of the nation into spectators rather than participants'.¹¹³ The group's work largely consisted of a number of policy case-studies, published as broadsheets in the PEP journal, *Planning*. Each study, it was

¹⁰⁹ FOA: B.103, F.J. Osborn to H. Morrison, 17 June 1946.

¹¹⁰ Brooke, 'Problems of "Socialist Planning"', 687-702; Brooke, *Labour's War*, 270-302; see above, pages 23-7 and 152-3.

¹¹¹ Brooke, *Labour's War*, 285, 339-40. See also the attitude of Stephen Taylor as expressed in a number of Research Department memoranda. For example, LPA: RD/353, 'A Plea for Restatement of Socialism', April 1950 and RD/356, 'The Policy of Democratic Socialism. A Restatement for 1950', May 1950.

¹¹² PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', *Planning*, 8 August 1950, 2. Towards the end of the war a group was formed at PEP to prepare a report on Active Democracy. See R. Goodman, 'The First Postwar Decade', in Pinder, (ed.) *Fifty Years of Political and Economic Planning*, 105.

¹¹³ PEP, 'A Programme and a Purpose', *Planning*, 13, 246, 15 March 1946, 16.

hoped, would provide the group and policymakers, with a better 'understanding of the vitality of our democratic institutions by finding out what they mean to the ordinary citizen and how far he is able to take part in running them.'¹¹⁴ The impact of social policy developments on local government was of particular interest: a common theme being the stifling effect of an increased reliance on centralised planning and delivery of services on participatory citizenship. In words which closely echoed the sentiments of Frederic Osborn and G.D.H.Cole, the sociologist Francois Lafitte, asked whether it was time to loosen the drive towards centralised planning, the old battles for a national minimum of social service provision now virtually won. 'The stress on efficiency and equality has been carried to the point where variety and richness of life are being neglected. One consequence of this pursuit', Lafitte argued, 'is that it has completed in one field what has been the growing trend of the past half century - that is the complete disruption of representative local government'.¹¹⁵

Lafitte's focus was social policy, but town planning and housing policy also epitomized this tension. In 1950 PEP considered the relationship between 'Town Planning and the Public', exploring, in particular, the impact of the 1947 planning system upon the ordinary citizen and how it fitted into what the group called 'our kind of democracy'.¹¹⁶ Planners did not have a good image: indeed, to many they seemed to be little more than the purveyors of arbitrary interference.¹¹⁷ A paper published by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 1950 examined the problem in the context of the 1947 system:

Town and country planning is obligatory and the present system offers planning authorities wide powers of compulsion. There is a danger that this will give rise to dragooning and direction in the control of development: a spirit that will never secure the best results. Town and country planning is essentially a field in which coercion should only be

¹¹⁴ PEP, 'Review of a Programme', *Planning*, 15, 289, 18 October 1948, 131.

¹¹⁵ PEP/PSI 12/42, F. Lafitte, 'Social Problems and Social Change', Executive Weekend Conference, 24 October 1948, 29.

¹¹⁶ PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', 2.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, FOA, B.117, correspondence, G.R. Pepler to F.J. Osborn, Secretary of the Town and Country Planning Association, 6 November 1942. Sections of the popular press, picking up the rhetoric of the Conservative Party, continued to play up this image of the planner into the postwar period.

used as a last resort. Rather should a situation be created in which the forces of moral and economic persuasion will all conduce to the realisation of the plan. If the development plan can clearly be seen to be good and if there are incentives for all land users and developers to conform to it in their common interest then town and country planning will be deservedly popular and effective.¹¹⁸

The key, PEP argued, was to involve the public at as many levels and as much as possible;

to get people to see their own interests in relation to those of the community, local interests in relation to national or regional interests, and their immediate advantage or disadvantage in the light of future common benefits. They must be able to recognise that in the plan is expressed as far as is humanly possible all that they most want themselves, for their families and for the community. To do so they must be able to acclaim the plan as an idea which they have helped to form and in whose execution they have an interest and incentive. They must also be able to know, at least in broad terms, what the public interest is.¹¹⁹

During the previous decade, Frederic Osborn had repeatedly argued for the need to involve the public in town planning matters. As secretary of the TCPA, much of Osborn's work was concerned with the publicising of planning issues.¹²⁰ However, throughout the reconstruction period, Osborn saw large didactic problems in such a task. Like Patrick Geddes before him, Osborn seems to have been torn by his eagerness to involve the public in town planning issues and his awareness of the complexity and what he regarded as the novelty of his subject. He recognised that the public had a right to express their preferences on this issue and, indeed, welcomed this form of decentralisation of initiative. For example, he often railed against the 'Bloomsbury' view of planning, that is the architects and aesthetes who dismissed 'the practical exposition

¹¹⁸ Memorandum on the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, cited in PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', 5.

¹¹⁹ PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', 8. This viewpoint certainly began to penetrate the local government scene by the beginning of the 1950s, with exhibitions and other schemes developed to increase awareness of local planning issues. See, for example, the speech by the Mayor of East Ham on the opening of a town planning exhibition at the local library printed in the *Barking and East Ham Express*, 7, September 1951, and quoted in Fielding *et al.*, "*England Arise!*", 111.

¹²⁰ Osborn's view did reflected a strong trend of opinions within the planning and architectural professions. See, for example, the editorial, 'Let's Tell the People', *Architectural Design*, 12, 7, July 1942, 131.

of the people's wants', which he saw as exemplified in the garden cities of Letchworth and Welwyn.¹²¹ Yet, it is common to find amongst his correspondence an exasperation with the public. Writing to Sir Montague Barlow on the proposals of the Uthwatt committee, he bemoaned the handicap faced by the TCPA 'by the inability even of the select public to understand the issues'. The tension is revealed as he continues, 'It really is too new a topic for the phase it has reached. Gradually the powers are being built up, but it needs a much clearer and stronger public opinion *to get them used rightly*'.²² Osborn further examined this matter in correspondence with William Robson. Robson described the planner's role in terms of the doctor-patient relationship: 'It is not the job of the planner to follow slavishly the priorities of the citizen who...has no knowledge of planning. When you go to a doctor, you describe your pains and symptoms, and *he* decides what is wrong with you and what are the most serious aspects of your illness'. Osborn, however, was uncomfortable with this analogy, preferring comparison with an architect or a dressmaker: 'I want him to know how to make a building or a dress hold together. But I want to choose the kind of building or costume; and when I want a shooting-suit or a bungalow I won't let the expert give me a pair of cami-knickers or a lighthouse'.¹²³ Osborn did not doubt the importance of an active democracy but it is clear that he found it hard to reconcile this abstract model with his view of reality. Osborn's community of individuals were seemingly not particularly interested in the question that was to provide them with a facet of their citizenship. This raised a number of problems to the concerned planner but it also affirmed the need for the subject, drawing attention

¹²¹ FOA: B.119, F.J. Osborn to C.B. Purdom, 2 June 1944. For Geddes see above, 81-2.

¹²² FOA: B14, Frederic Osborn to Sir Montague Barlow, 11 July 1944. The gap between 'an intensively trained minority' and 'a bewildered lay majority', was a problem very widely felt among planning and architectural professionals. See, for example, editorial in *Architectural Design*, 13, 9, September 1943, 178.

¹²³ FOA: B125, William Robson to Frederic Osborn, 21 October 1943; Frederic Osborn to William Robson, 26 October 1943. A similar view is articulated by the planner Thomas Sharp, for example in his Presidential Address to the Town Planning Institute in 1945. Public participation in planning, in his view, meant active consultation with the public after the main contours of the plan had been drawn up. Consultation, criticism and the ultimate right of the public to reject parts or all of the plan, in his view, secured the 'democratic character of the plan', T. Sharp, 'Presidential Address', *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 32, 1, (1945), 1-5.

to the rationale of town and country planning itself. As Osborn saw it, town planning was not only a question of efficient distribution of the nation's amenities, industries and its population. Town planning had a role in fostering participatory and active communities. Planners were thus faced with a dilemma. The public were not responding to the possibilities of town planning, yet within this very fact lay the justification for the planner's task. This dualism was encapsulated for Osborn in the County of London plan. He described London opinion as 'a "sad" cake - a crisp layer around the edges, with a clammy, inert central wedge that stops the spread of enthusiasm across the mass'. Yet 'one of the fine purposes of the Abercrombie Plans' was the restoration of 'local citizenship, [and] the power to think and act together'. This was the dilemma: 'this important End in democratic planning is also a necessary Means to democratic planning'.¹²⁴

The search for a resolution to this dilemma implied an enormous agenda of issues. At one level lay the problem of how to generate understanding and interest in town planning among the public. Anxiety about the possibilities of achieving this increased over the reconstruction period. The further Britain moved from the desperate days of the Blitz, the more difficult it was to raise the public's interest in the benefits of good town planning. Their aspirations for reconstruction now focused on the homely and the mundane.¹²⁵ In an attempt to offset this depletion of interest, planners urged the importance of communicating with the public simply and openly with a view to encouraging their informed engagement with the planning process. Exhibitions, for example, were encouraged as an effective method of engaging with the public and improving their participation in the planning process.¹²⁶ Yet, as Osborn's comments

¹²⁴ FOA: C3, F.J.Osborn, 'Which Way London? -Disorderly Sprawl or Planned Dispersal', published in *Town and Country Planning*, Autumn 1945, 126-31.

¹²⁵ See for example statements in the architectural and planning press, for example, *Architects' Journal*, 21 January 1943. Where public interest could be roused, it overwhelmingly emphasised the need for housing rather than community-based town planning. Peoples' interest focused on the home, and in particular, on returning to a life of domestic privacy. I am grateful to Dr. N. Tiratsoo for his insights on these points.

¹²⁶ *Architects' Journal*, 21 March 1946. In Coventry, the City Corporation began a two-hour 'Know Your City' bus tour, which raised a lot of popular interest over the summer of 1948. See Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, 51.

imply, these attempts to foster public participation rarely moved beyond the cosmetic; a gloss which could mask but not replace the dimness of public interest. More fundamental, indeed, structural issues seemed to lie at the root of the problem; issues which coalesced around the question of what constituted a community and what structures could foster awareness and expression of communal solidarity in peacetime as in war. A central aspect of this question was the relationship between 'the community' and the structure of its local government. PEP, in exploring this question, encountered a familiar tension:

...the conflict on the one hand between the need to consider the technical and economic advantages of providing services over large areas, and the consequent tendency towards bigger units of administration; and on the other hand, the need to maintain and strengthen local democracy. The efficiency of planning on all important matters calls for these larger areas; but the ordinary man or the local group sees a different picture: a remote body, difficult to get at and not a part of local life.¹²⁷

Town planning graphically illustrated these problems. The unharnessed growth of towns had been viewed with concern for many decades; the social and cultural effects of this development, the anomie of urban living, the problems of suburban dysfunction and so on, had occasioned debate since the early years of the century. Moreover, the trend was damaging the very lines of communication which fed local democracy: the impact of town growth on a citizen's affinity with a town's collective voice, the local authority, caused particular alarm. An ironic situation was developing as G.D.H.Cole pointed out:

only very recently has local government acquired the powers and functions which could enable it to become a vital instrument for the expression of the democratic spirit; and [yet], most unfortunately this growth of powers has been accompanied by a tremendously rapid spread of towns which has gone far towards neutralizing the development of local democracy. For urban areas have both growth so populous and complex in their problems as to produce many of the defects of parliamentary democracy, and have also expanded so much out of relation to the recognised areas of election and administration as to lose their living reality.¹²⁸

Town and country planning could, by the later 1940s, restrict the size of towns and provide for the development of new ones to house the displaced. Yet, this remedy was increasingly seen as insufficient unless it was accompanied by means for greater community involvement in both the planning process and in local government affairs

²⁷ PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', 7.

¹²⁸ Cole, 'Democracy Face to Face with Hugeness', 94.

generally. For Cole, the solution lay in the reorganisation of local government into a combined force of regional authorities, which were large enough to run efficient public services, and small neighbourhood councils, which would be able to remain close to the people which they served.¹²⁹ Yet, as chapter four demonstrated, this involved the confrontation of entrenched local government interests and a huge investment of time, which was not available to a government whose priorities were the rapid establishment of the welfare state. PEP suggested the importance of voluntary groups and semi-official bodies in breaking this impasse. While it shared the belief that the ultimate responsibility for developing public awareness lay with the local authorities themselves, it argued that voluntary organisations, (ranging from professional bodies such as the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Town Planning Institute, the TPCA, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, to more generalised bodies representing the communities' interests such as the Youth Hostels Association, the NCSS, the National Trust, and even trade union branches), could play a key part in fostering the 'growing public awareness of planning' so essential to democracy.¹³⁰ Indeed, such groups could work in conjunction with the local authorities, for example, in the production of planning surveys, and begin to forge a stronger bond of common interest between the official and the citizen.¹³¹ For the citizen to wish to play an active and participatory role in the reconstructed society, he or she had to 'feel that it was worthwhile and exciting to take part in democratic activities.'¹³² A regenerated and community-orientated local government system acting closely with voluntary groups and with individual citizens themselves, offered the best chance of re-igniting the residual spark of common purpose which, it seemed, had served Britain so well during the war, and which was deemed to be fundamental to the democratic socialism of the peace.

Land and town planning policy reflected the tensions felt by the Labour party as

¹²⁹ See above, 160-1.

¹³⁰ PEP, 'Town Planning and the Public', 10-11.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 13-14. This theme will be examined in greater detail in Part 3.

¹³² PEP/PSI 12/20, 14-15, M. Young, Executive Committee Minutes, 15 January 1946.

it attempted to tease out a workable statement of the boundaries and form of state action. From the early years of the party land redistribution held a particular resonance, whether in the context of fiscal or the physical redistribution of the nation's resources. Utilisation of the radical rhetoric of communal solidarity was common not only in the early period, but beyond into the 1940s. Party discussions on the regulation and redistribution of socially-created value, of which land and town planning policy were a part, uncovered more than Labour's desire to create a more equitable society; it raised a more wide-ranging, if inconclusive, debate over how a democratic socialist state should interact with its citizens. However, it proved extremely difficult for the party to translate this loosely articulated discourse into practical policies. Town planning and land policies exemplify this difficulty. Town planning policy, brought to prominence by the problems of the distressed areas of the 1930s and by the bombs of the Battle of Britain, raised urgent questions about the nature of the state's relationship with the nation's physical resources and, thus, with civil society and the market. Policy discussions within and around the Labour Party, for instance, demonstrate an awareness of, indeed, a concern with, questions of accountability and responsibility in the process of community development. Central control was not the dogmatic aim of the party; even Lewis Silkin, who was adamant of the need to enhance the nation's land use powers, recognised the role of local community control. In addition, key party figures expressed concern at the apparent divorce of the population from the formulation of planning policy and explored ways to rectify this situation. In reaching beyond these statements of interest, however, the Labour Party stalled. The nation required Labour quickly to build new houses and factories; practical politics required Labour to steer a delicate path between increased state control of land use and the interests of property. In practice, this made town planning a rather fragile basis from which to explore and build a commitment to freedom within planning.

PART III:
BRIDGING THE GAP IN THE DEMOCRATIC MACHINE

BRIDGING THE GAP IN THE DEMOCRATIC MACHINE

The pursuit of a democratic socialism animated by active citizenship was not regarded as solely a matter of perfecting the structural relationship between the central and the local state. While, as the previous part revealed, many people within the Labour party ascribed a pivotal role to the elective principle in their understanding of citizenship, there were alternative, or additional, visions for citizenship. The individual citizen had to play his or her part, and cultivate a participatory relationship with the state; a task to be facilitated by sensitive and progressive government activity. Herbert Morrison, for example, told his party conference in 1948 that 'Ballot-box democracy, where the people go and vote - if they can be bothered and persuaded and shoved around to go and vote - every few years and do nothing much in between, is out of date. We must have an active living democracy in our country and we must whip up our citizens to their responsibilities just as we canvass them in elections or just as the air-raid wardens did in the war'.¹ A similar concern had emerged in the discussions of the 'Active Democracy' group of the research organisation Political and Economic Planning. The group was set up in May 1945 largely at the instigation of Michael Young, the principal author of Labour's 1945 election manifesto. Its task was to examine the precise workings of democracy and to explore the emerging relationship between the state and the individual citizen. The group felt that, in general terms, democracy had 'emerged successfully' from the war revealing, indeed, 'tremendous possibilities' for the future. But, they argued, it was 'idle to suppose that [the] way ahead is entirely clear, or that [the] simple process of injecting more and more "democracy" into every activity of life is a straight high road to success'.² Just as G.D.H.Cole had noted in the context of local government, the group argued that the chief difficulty lay in the changing nature of society itself: 'The scale and complexity of modern civilisation demands large scale planning, large forms of organisation, expensive technical and administrative resources. How are these to be combined with continued free participation of the individual in social

¹ *The Labour Party: Reports of the Forty-Eighth Annual Conference*, 1948, (1948), 130.

² PEP/PSI 12/20, 'Draft synopsis and notes for an introduction for group on "Active Democracy"', 11 January 1946, 10.

life and government?’³ Finding a means to connect these apparently contradictory forces, therefore, became a much cited objective. The impact and efficacy of the mechanics of democracy had to be deepened so that each citizen would ‘feel that it was worthwhile and exciting to take part in democratic activities.’⁴ Only with this devolution of civic interest would the sense of national purpose which had been so valued during the war, be maintained.⁵ An amalgam of individual and group participation was required. One particularly clear strand that emerges from the discussions on how to foster this motivation is an increased awareness of the importance of some sort of bridge between the state and the individual citizen, and of finding ways to give this nexus tangible form.

This part will examine two aspects of the contemporary exploration of the interrelationship between the state and the individual. The first chapter focuses on Labour’s views on the future of the voluntary action and the role of voluntary agencies in modern social welfare provision. The second addresses more specific questions of the civic value of public relations and information circulation for the development of an active bond of citizenship and looks at the rising interest in social psychology and ‘human relations’ within significant sections of the Labour party.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ PEP/PSI 12/20 14-15, Young, Executive Committee minutes. Awareness of the connection between the scale of social activity and experience and a participatory approach to social affairs had featured in debates in the interwar years. See, for example, C. Braithwaite, *The Voluntary Citizen. An Enquiry into the Place of Philanthropy in the Community*, (1938), 61-2.

⁵ PEP/PSI 12/20, 39, Executive Committee Minutes and Papers, draft for broadsheet, ‘A Programme and a Purpose’, 8.

VOLUNTARY ACTION: 'THE VERY LIFEBLOOD OF DEMOCRACY'

As the chapters in Part II illustrated the debate on planning between the early 1930s and the 1950s informed, and gave focus to the contemporary interest in notions of citizenship. In particular, attention to the strategy of planning and its implications for democratic government, was accentuated during the Second World War through exchanges between libertarian and socialist theorists. The anti-planning critique of Friedrich Hayek, for example, was challenged by Labour theorists and politicians reasserting the complementarity of sensitive social and economic planning and individual freedom.¹ Yet the reality of this defence still had to be demonstrated in practice. In particular, it remained to be seen if Britain could successfully fuse the social and economic benefits of planning with her libertarian and pluralist heritage. A number of academics and social commentators who sympathised with Labour's broad aims for democratic socialism, therefore, began to shift the focus onto the apparent deficiencies of democratic planning as it had developed during the war and reconstruction years. As the left-leaning sociologist Francois Lafitte put it '...planning has been taken out of our hands - planners are doing too much'.² The result, he continued, was decisions taken at an unhealthy 'remoteness from the citizen'.³

A reappraisal of the meaning of democracy and citizenship in a modern social democratic society thus began to emerge from this intellectual and political debate. In particular, attention focused on the need to forge animate bonds between the state and the individual citizens. From the later 1940s, the means to effect this end became a

¹ See Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*. A libertarian critique of planning had already begun to develop in the middle 1930s, most notably from the economists Lionel Robbins and from Ludwig von Mises. See, for example, L. Robbins, *The Great Depression*. See Tomlinson, 'Planning: Debate and Policy in the 1940s', 154-174. Also see above, 23-5, 152-4.

² PEP/PSI Papers, 12/42, F.Lafitte, 'Social Problems and Social Change', Executive Weekend Conference, 24 October 1948, 38.

³ *Ibid.*, 28.

significant aspect of socialist debate.⁴ The position of voluntary action and voluntary associations in a planned society was a strong feature of these discussions.⁵

The role of voluntary action in a society fast moving towards socialism posed a number of interesting questions for members of the Labour party and their Fabian associates. While state provision of material needs had long been a staple component of Labour thought, most party members did not believe that voluntary effort could reasonably be excluded from social provision. Indeed, many argued the importance of its role in fostering a humane and dignified society. Labour's ideas and policy discussions on the future of voluntary action, if rooted within the context of the concepts of citizenship and democracy as suggested above, offer a useful insight into the breadth of the party's thought on the role of the state and its relationship with independent organisations and with individuals and, indeed, of the nature of socialism in the context of postwar Britain.

The historiography of this aspect of Labour thought, however, is notably weak. In part this is reflective of a more general historiographical trend, that is, the dominance of a rigidly state-centred analysis in the history of social policy in twentieth-century Britain. The twentieth century, in essence, has become historically associated with the eclipse of voluntarism and its supplementation by the organs of the state. In broad terms, this delineation is correct.⁶ By the end of the Second World War widespread questioning of the future of voluntary action and charity was undoubtedly apparent.⁷ In the opinion of many commentators its prospects were, at best, uncertain, having fallen prey to charges of inefficiency and insubstantiality. In addition, an alternative solution had been invoked: the new state welfare settlement, based on the principle of universalism, seen

⁴ See, for example, the 'Whither Socialism' series of Fabian Autumn lectures in 1950, published as Fabian Tracts.

⁵ These issues are also discussed in the following chapter which explores the comparable interest in developing public relations and information circulation as an animate link between the individual citizen and the state.

⁶ See the introduction of G. Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain*, 1-18.

⁷ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 134.

to portend the marginalisation, even disappearance, of voluntary activity from the social and economic sphere. Certainly, by mid-century the state had located itself and its resources at the centre of social welfare provision. Yet, this is an incomplete interpretation: an outline with little sense of the dynamics or scale of change and, importantly, with only the most cursory attention to attitudes and responses of contemporary policy-makers.⁸ The monopoly of state-centred analyses has weakened in recent years. In a decisive move away from preoccupation with state provision of welfare, historians such as Frank Prochaska and Geoffrey Finlayson have focused on the continuation of voluntary provision of welfare by charitable bodies, informal and commercial self-help groups.⁹ Nevertheless, deficiencies still remain. While historical studies of charity and voluntary action in the first half of the twentieth century grow in number and detail, the post-1945 period remains neglected, still encased within the orthodox historiographical framework and harnessed to the supposed ideological rejection of voluntarism by the postwar Labour government. In addition, a rigid segregation exists between discussions of state and voluntary provision of welfare. As a consequence, fundamental questions concerning the boundaries of the state and their relation to civil

⁸ M. Bruce, *The Coming of the Welfare State*, (1961); D. Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, (1973); P. Thane, 'The Historiography of the British Welfare State', *Social History Society Newsletter*, 15, 1, (1990), 12-15.

⁹ Historical analyses of social welfare provision have tended to see the development of state intervention in whiggish, teleological terms which imply a fairly smooth and steady progression towards a comprehensive state welfare settlement. This teleological analysis, however, has been weakened by the reopening of the political debate on welfare provision from the 1970s. Recent historical research is reflecting this development, exploring welfare provision within a cyclical framework which analyses both the expansion and the contraction of state activity across time, thus providing the opportunity for a more explicit consideration of the changing relationship between public and private provision of welfare. See, for example, J. Innes, 'The "Mixed Economy of Welfare" in Early Modern Britain: from Child to Malthus c.1670-1803', in M. Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in Britain*; G. Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain* and 'A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the State in British Social Welfare, 1911-1949', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1, 2, (1990), 183-206; F.K. Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse*, (1988), *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, and *Royal Bounty. The Making of a Welfare Monarchy*, (1995); Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State* also breaks away from a rigid statist perspective as does P. Johnson, 'Redistribution and Social Welfare in Britain from the Poor Law to Beveridge', in Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare*.

society remain underexposed.¹⁰

While, undeniably, not a clear or coherent policy area for the Labour party, the future role of voluntary action was undoubtedly an area that was beginning to attract wider attention, not only from within the voluntary organisations themselves, but among party members and associates and, to some extent, among the party leadership.¹¹ Yet, as noted above, responses to the issues raised by voluntarism have been neglected in studies of Labour thought and policy. In many respects this is unsurprising - the response was confused, often contradictory and discussed either in the decentralised, backstage environment of departmental meetings or in the context of academic conferences and studies.¹² Nevertheless, it does merit closer attention not least because the historiography of this aspect of Labour thought is in itself interesting: many of the gaps and misrepresentations in this area often stem from contemporary and subsequent Labour supporters themselves. These could be lessened, however, by avoiding an oversimplified definition of voluntarism and by dismantling the misleading homogeneity of Labour reactions.¹³

Much of our understanding of Labour's attitude to voluntarism during the formative years of the welfare state is shaped by the image, built up by Richard Crossman amongst others, of Labour's hostility to 'the do-good volunteer'. The volunteer

¹⁰ Cronin, *The Politics of State Expansion*, for example, while centrally concerned with the forces which restrained state growth in the twentieth century pays little attention to the role of voluntary action and the ways in which it interacted with the state. See also Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain*, 11

¹ The future of voluntary activity in the social services, for example, became the subject of the Nuffield College Social Reconstruction Survey, headed by G.D.H.Cole. The findings of the Social Services Sub-Committee of the Social Reconstruction Survey were published under the editorship of A.F.C.Bourdillon, *Voluntary Social Services. Their Place in the Modern State*, (1945).

¹² For this second arena see, for example, the views of the Fabian Society as articulated at the Buscot 'Problems Ahead' Conferences of the later 1940s and early 1950s.

¹³ Considerable efforts have been made in recent years to tighten the definition and classification of voluntary action in historical studies. See, in particular, Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 6-8; B. Harrison, 'Historical Perspectives', in B. Harrison and N. Deakin, *Voluntary Organisations and Democracy*, Sir George Haynes Lecture, 1987, (1988), 1. Labour's attitude to voluntary action, however, has not received such detailed revision.

of the interwar years was portrayed as amateurish, indeed, the opposite of the professionals and trained administrators who it was envisaged would staff the socialist welfare state. Voluntarism essentially meant philanthropy which itself was narrowly interpreted as, in Crossman's words, an 'odious expression of social oligarchy and churchy bourgeois attitudes': 'We detested voluntary hospitals maintained by flag days', he says, 'We despised Boy Scouts and Girl Guides'.¹⁴ These words, spoken to an audience by a lecturer looking for an impact, were phrased more for effect than for posterity, yet this retrospective interpretation of Crossman's has, nevertheless, assumed a certain credence and authority. Its black and white rhetoric too often has been taken at face value and, perhaps, we have been misled.¹⁵

However, other sources seem to compound this view, of which possibly the best contemporary example is Aneurin Bevan's position on the role of voluntary effort in the National Health Service. In his study of the King's Fund and the voluntary hospitals of London, Frank Prochaska argues, 'Bevan was transfixed by the idea that the State was the embodiment of good and the ultimate source of welfare' and to a large extent this is an accurate depiction: Bevan found the idea of charitable provision of health care distasteful because it mitigated against one of his chief aims in health, that is, fairness.¹⁶ He did not believe that spontaneous charity nor, indeed, the sort of mutual-aid provision he had seen in the South Wales coalfield, could offer this. Central planning, on the other hand, could bring reality to the ideal of universalism, which to Bevan meant uniformity

¹⁴ R.H.S. Crossman, 'The Role of the Volunteer in the Modern Social Service', in A.H. Halsey, *Traditions of Social Policy. Essays in Honour of Violet Butler*, (Oxford, 1976), 264-5.

¹⁵ Crossman's views on the social and cultural position of voluntary associations in Britain were much more subtle, even positive. Writing for the Fabian Society in 1950 on 'Socialist Values in a Changing Society', for example, Crossman stated 'the essence of British democracy is this voluntary, spontaneous organisation from below. Should we not recognise that this spontaneous organisation may be so valuable that it is worth losing a good deal of so-called efficiency in order to preserve it?', Fabian Tract 286, (1950), 6. Clearly we should avoid equating Labour's distaste for many aspects of philanthropy in the field of social welfare provision with hostility towards voluntarism as a whole.

¹⁶ Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, 156.

as much as comprehensiveness.¹⁷ This stance led him, for example, to disregard the appeals of trade unionists and others for the maintenance of locally provided hospitals in favour of a system of nationalised, centrally planned hospitals. Letters in reaction to the nationalisation policy reached the Ministry from numerous sources. Many focused on the significance of decentralised control, stressing the importance of a sense of local cohesiveness to the success of the hospitals, both financially and for the quality of patient care. The majority of the petitioners were quick to note the popularity of their organisations and to point out their predominantly working-class membership. Certainly, support for the voluntary hospital movement was not regarded as contrary to a left-wing political allegiance. A letter to Bevan from a Guisborough trade union official, for example, attests to the strength of the attachment of the Cleveland miners to the local voluntary hospital. The official, Mr Welham, goes as far as to warn Bevan that many local people were considering severing their connections with the Labour party as a result of their hospital policy.¹⁸ This was by no means an isolated opinion; numerous letters bemoaned the nationalisation policy as depriving communities of direct control of their local institutions, decades of interest and goodwill, which combined to create a responsive and energetic service, were about to be lost.¹⁹ Was 'the benefit to be obtained nationally by a comprehensive National Hospital Service so great as to justify the loss of the magnificent psychological asset represented by the Voluntary Hospitals of this country?' -

¹⁷ PRO: CAB 129/3, CP(45) 205, 5 October 1945, memorandum by the Minister of Health, 'The Future of the Hospital Services'.

¹⁸ PRO: MH 77/76, National Health Service Representation, Voluntary Hospitals, 1944-6, letter to Bevan from Mr Welham, 5 March 1946, re. 'State Control of the Hospitals'.

¹⁹ PRO: MH77/76, NHS Representations, Voluntary Hospitals, 1944-6. Dr Somerville Hastings of the Socialist Medical Association also reminded the Labour party that 'the voluntary hospitals are strongly entrenched in the hearts of many members of the Labour Party, LPA: RDR/37, Labour Party Public Health Sub-Committee, Somerville Hastings, 'Hospital Development after the War', 2; see Earwicker, 'The Labour Movement and the Creation of the National Health Service', 151-2 for examples of the heavy involvement of many local Labour groups and trade unions in the voluntary hospitals during the 1920s. Moreover, during the 1920s there was a significant degree of support among trade unionists for the extension of medical provision through the system of 'approved societies' operating under the 1911 National Insurance Act, of which they were part. For discussion of this, Earwicker, 'The Labour Movement and the Creation of a National Health Service', 169-87.

an asset which though indefinable and intangible constituted, in the view of the President of the British Hospitals Contributory Schemes Association, 'the vital difference between a society of free men within a free democracy, and a social organisation wherein benevolence, self-help and conscious citizenship have no place'.²⁰ In Bevan's view, universality of provision was a unsurpassable benefit. Indeed, Bevan's belief in the importance of universalism did not only preclude the maintenance of a voluntary sector, it also led him to question the viability of local government responsibility for health. Again, the structural supports of this alternative policy were, in Bevan's view, flawed:

Under any local government system - even if modified by joint boards or otherwise -there will tend to be a better service in the richer areas, a worse service in the poorer. Yet all the population will be paying the same national rates of insurance contribution and will expect the State to see that an equally good service is available everywhere.²¹

Yet, it would be wrong to equate Bevan's views on this issue as inimical to the development of a 'conscious citizenship' as many of the defenders of the voluntary hospital movement suggested.²² Bevan's policy for nationalisation arose from a desire to render the health service equally available to all and, by placing its control in the hands of the Minister of Health, accountable to all. Bevan's understanding of citizenship did not exclude a notion of participation, it was instead a participation which was located in the

²⁰ PRO: MH77/62, NHS Representations, British Hospitals Contributory Schemes Association, 1943-46.

²¹ PRO: PREM 8/288. CP (45) 205 Memorandum by Minister of Health, 5 October 1945. See also above, 165-6. In the early to mid-1950s, however, Bevan urged consideration of returning the hospital service to a reorganised system of local government on the grounds of the civic importance of a vital local interest. See, for example, Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, 91, 188; Bevan, 'Local Government Management of the Hospitals', *The Municipal Journal*, 12, March 1954, 544-5 reprinted in C.Webster (ed.), *Aneurin Bevan on the National Health Service*, (1991), 195-201.

²² Prochaska, as a historian of this movement has tended to fall into the same pattern, of equating voluntary action with active citizenship without sufficiently considering alternative visions of citizenship which see the state as providing the most significant outlet for social participation through mechanisms of accountability and the electoral process.

parliamentary process.²³

It is important to relate this aspect of Bevan's hospital policy in this context because it serves as a reminder that Bevan's decision to nationalise the hospitals ought to be viewed more broadly, and more subtly, than an capricious strike against the paternalism of philanthropy.²⁴ In addition, while Bevan did not leave the hospitals under disparate voluntary control, he clearly did see some role for voluntarism in the health services, for example, in the areas of medical research, auxiliary nursing and Hospital Friends' organisations and, of course, blood transfusion.²⁵ Also the health service utilised the assistance of around 10,000 volunteers serving on regional hospital boards and hospital management committees. Equally, where local authority control of health care remained, for example, in midwifery, health visiting, home nursing and ambulance transportation, the partnership which had already developed between official and voluntary service providers remained intact.²⁶ The continued presence of voluntary action within the nationalised health service was substantiated in a survey initiated by the National Council of Social Service and the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London. While, the report noted, there was an 'immediate decline in the amount of voluntary personal service given to hospitals' and the disbandment of 'some voluntary societies associated with hospitals, particularly local societies....Within a very short time...it was

²³ For a more general indication of the importance of Parliament to the Labour party see Fielding *et al*, "*England Arise*", 87-8; Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, 32-3; Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol. 2, 22-4. Bevan's belief in the importance of parliamentary accountability was also manifested in his distrust of the boards of the nationalised industries. See Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol 2, 372. Earwicker, 'The Labour Movement and the Creation of the National Health Service', 49, 349-50.

²⁴ Charles Webster's analysis of the contested nature of proposals for a regional solution to hospital provision would tend to back up this argument. See Webster, 'Conflict and Consensus'.

²⁵ The Hospital Friends organisation, in as sense, maintained the bond between the local community and the local (formerly voluntary) hospital. The movement was strengthened by the formation of a national network under the National League of Hospital Friends. On the blood transfusion service see Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship*; Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 282.

²⁶ E.Carter, 'The Partnership between the Statutory and the Voluntary Social Services in Postwar Britain', *Social Service Review* 23, (1949), 158-75.

seen that the need for such service was as great as ever, and voluntary service revived to its former strength'.²⁷ This episode is revealing of the complexity of Labour's attitude to voluntarism: it ought not to be taken as the exemplar of the party's position on the principle of voluntarism, but rather as one element in a multi-faceted and evolving policy. There are a number of points which need to be further developed in this context.

First, it is clear that within the Labour party's understanding of the role of voluntarism during this period, there were some areas regarded as more suitable for voluntary involvement than others. Voluntarism, quite clearly, was sidelined from the central areas of social reconstruction. The Labour party had, for some time, been resolute in its view that voluntary effort was not only insufficient, but inappropriate for the delivery of basic social services.²⁸ Nevertheless, the role of voluntary action in the reconstructed state was not dismissed as negligible. To a certain extent this postwar stance was only to be expected. It reflected the pragmatic acceptance by the government of the utility and cost-effectiveness of the established framework of voluntary effort. This attitude is apparent, for example, in the provision of social services for the physically disabled. It was an attractive option for a government already committed to a massive overhaul of social service provision.²⁹ It might, indeed, be regarded as a sop to

²⁷ J. Trevelyan, *Voluntary Service and the State: A Study of the Needs of the Hospital Service*, study undertaken for the NCSS and King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, (1952), 71, quoted in NCVO archive, NCSS, *Annual Reports, 1951-52*, (1953), 13.

²⁸ N. Deakin, 'The Perils of Partnership. The Voluntary Sector and the State, 1945-1992', in J. Davis Smith and R. Hedley (eds.), *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector in Britain*, (1994), 43; Indeed, the view that certain key areas of social service were too important to be left to the vagaries of voluntary provision was an attitude that was gaining considerable currency among wider circles by the outbreak of the Second World War. T.S.Simey, for example, asserted that 'most of the "mass-production" services are entirely outside the scope of voluntary action and effort, which is unable to cope effectively with the basic problems of social administration, such as the relief of poverty, unemployment or...sickness'. See Simey, *Principles of Social Administration*, (Oxford, 1937), 136; Braithwaite, *The Voluntary Citizen*, 23-5; PEP, *Report on the British Social Services: A Survey of the Existing Public Social Services in Great Britain with Proposals for Future Development*, (1937), 174. See also Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 242-50.

²⁹ On the Labour party's policy for the welfare of the blind see, for example, the statement of the Policy Committee of the NEC, Minutes (8), 25 June 1951. There were those, however, who disagreed with the Policy Committee decision. See, for example,

voluntarism, that is, cushioning the blow of curtailment of function by allocating a niche where altruistic amateurs might still find a role, essentially as providers of tea and sympathy. This argument, however, is valid only up to a point. In particular, it fails to recognise the significance of what Geoffrey Finlayson called the 'mixed, and somewhat paradoxical, parentage' of both the ideology and implementation of welfare policy; a genealogy which, indeed, included Labour's own contribution.³⁰

The Labour movement undoubtedly had accumulated a wealth of first-hand experience of voluntary action amongst its leadership and rank and file in the years leading up to the creation of the welfare state. Significantly, this included experience in both mutual-aid bodies and charitable organisations. In addition, as statutory involvement in social welfare increased during the interwar and wartime years, Labour politicians gained practical experience of the interaction of statutory and voluntary provision in both the national and local arenas. The history of Labour's involvement in various aspects of voluntary action is large, disparate and complex and, thus, quite beyond the scope of this study which can merely point to certain areas of particular interest.

The language of Idealism, as noted in the introduction, influenced many key figures in the young Labour Party. In particular, the notion of citizenship as an expression of service to one's fellows in the community permeated the Labour party fusing strongly with the ethical messages of the ILP and the Christian Socialist rhetoric of the brotherhood of man.³¹ For many of those who found the rhetoric of Idealism resonant and compatible with their socialist aims, voluntary action continued to be regarded as a vital means of expressing citizenship and of giving service to one's fellows. Clement Attlee, as a member of the ILP before the First World War, also engaged in social work in the

R/72, November 1951, 'The Blind Persons Charter. Comment on the Policy Committee Statement'. A similar motivation seems, at least in part, to have motivated the government's decision to maintain the civil defence organisation, the Women's Voluntary Service. See, for example, PRO: CAB 129/914; CAB 71/16, LP(45)153, 28 August 1945, memorandum by Home Secretary, 'The Future of the Womens' Voluntary Service'; CAB 132/6, LP(50)102, 20 December 1950, memorandum by Home Secretary, 'The Future of the Women's Voluntary Service'.

³⁰ Finlayson, *Citizen, State, and Social Welfare*, 281, 264.

³ See Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', 133-4; M.Francis, 'Economics and Ethics', 237. See also above, 27-9.

east end of London, working as a manager for Haileybury House Boys' Club in Stepney and for the social settlement, Toynbee Hall.³² R.H.Tawney, Arthur Greenwood and numerous other supporters and members of the party were closely involved in the work of the Workers Educational Association and similar adult education bodies.³³ In addition, Labour women, like many other women in the interwar years, found voluntary action provided an arena for the fruitful expression of their citizenship and their social concerns. For some, such as Margaret Bondfield, it was to remain a significant aspect of their work long into the twentieth century.³⁴

Moreover, as a 'new philanthropy' of co-operation and partnership with statutory welfare provision took hold in the interwar years, Labour politicians active in local government found themselves working in close proximity with various voluntary providers of social service.³⁵ Herbert Morrison, as leader of the London County Council in the 1930s, for example, had presided over 'a number of successful examples in statutory-voluntary collaboration, notably the much-admired school care committees'.³⁶

³² C.R. Attlee, Speech at a Luncheon of the National Association of Boys' Clubs, reprinted in *Purpose and Policy. Selected Speeches by the Rt.Hon. C.R.Attlee*, (1946). See also Attlee, *The Social Worker*, (1920); K. Harris, *Attlee*, (1982), 17-21, 26-30 His time at Toynbee Hall, however was not a particularly fulfilling period. According to his biographer Harris, Attlee found the atmosphere at Toynbee Hall rather staid, indeed 'out of date', Harris, *Attlee*, 30.

³³ As many as fourteen members of the government in 1945, as well as a very large number of MPs were either former tutors or students, or members of the WEA executive, R.Fieldhouse, 'Adults Learning - for Leisure, Recreation and Democracy', in J.Fyrth (ed.), *Labour's Promised Land? Culture and Society in Labour Britain 1945-51*, (1995), 267. For discussion of the strong and self-asserted connection between adult education and voluntarism see J.F.C.Harrison, *Learning and Living 1790-1960. A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement*, (1961), 325-27. The WEA had strong connection with the Oxford Idealism which also inspired Toynbee Hall. For example the Balliol Master and Idealist A.D.Lindsay was strongly involved with the movement.

³⁴ Margaret Bondfield was a Vice-President of the National Council of Social Service and chair of the Women's Group on Public Welfare during the war and in the immediate postwar period. See also Braithwaite, *The Voluntary Citizen*, 57-58 and 66-77.

³⁵ E. Macadam, *The New Philanthropy. A Study of the Relations Between the Statutory and Voluntary Services*, (1934); Braithwaite, *The Voluntary Citizen*.

³⁶ Deakin, 'The Perils of Partnership', 43.

Under this scheme, volunteers, 'so far as possible recruited from local residents' and 'by no means all drawn from the so-called leisured classes', joined together in local committees under the central direction of the local authority school care sub-committee, to assist in the delivery of auxiliary education services and, more generally, to give support to local children.³⁷ Indeed, as Deakin has noted, when Morrison spoke, in 1948, of the value of 'the pioneers who point the way and the critics who keep us up to the mark, he spoke from experience.'³⁸

Other influences also need to be considered, for example, the extensive Labour involvement in mutual-aid organisations. A desire for independence from the state or from charity motivated many working-class people to establish or join organisations of mutual-aid in the later Victorian and Edwardian years. In the Edwardian and early interwar years, this activity was buttressed by a residual wariness of state activity in the field of social service. Thane, for example, has pointed to the distrust of the dynamic and interventionist state among workers' organisations in the early twentieth century. State welfare programmes which accommodated working-class traditions of self-help and which allowed for a high degree of participatory democracy were greatly preferred to those which relied on impersonal or intrusive official regulation.³⁹ While the intensity of this distrust dissipated in the years following the First World War, the rhetoric of independence remained important: interest in state welfare was accompanied by a

³⁷ Macadam, *The New Philanthropy*, 176-78. Also see H. Jennings, *The Private Citizen in Public Social Work: An Account of the Voluntary Children's Care Committee System in London*, (1930). The school care committees were first set up by the London County Council in 1907.

³⁸ Deakin, 'The Perils of Partnership', 43; H. Morrison, *The Peaceful Revolution*, 130. Of course, co-operation between the statutory and voluntary sectors was consolidated during the wartime emergency. See, for example, the work of the Women's Voluntary Service, the co-operation developed between the Ministry of Health and the Waifs and Strays Society, Save the Children Fund, the Invalid Children's Aid Association and the Friends' Welfare Relief Service, etc, for the provision of residential nursery services and other emergency child care provision.

³⁹ P. Thane, 'The Working Class and State Welfare 1880-1914', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study for Labour History*, 31, (1975). See also, H. Pelling, 'The Working Class and the Origins of the Welfare State', in his *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain*, (1968), 1-18.

continued pride in the associational culture of mutual-aid.⁴⁰ Finlayson notes, for example, that when the Labour government abolished the ‘genuinely-seeking work’ test in 1930, there was resentment about ‘scroungers and malingerers’, often coming from the working classes themselves. MacDonald was heartened by this reaction, since it confirmed that his belief that ‘to establish people in incomes which represent no effort to get or to do work is the very antithesis of socialism. The State as Lady Bountiful may be a fatal extension of Toryism, but it is not the beginning of Socialism’, was a view shared by many of Labour’s rank and file.⁴¹ If working-class wariness of state intervention in areas of social welfare receded as collectivist rhetoric found an ever stronger purchase in a society worn down by the vagaries of the capitalist economy, appreciation of role of voluntary activity in British social life remained strong.⁴² Free association for mutual aid and benefit was regarded as a fundamental part of Britain’s heritage of liberalism and toleration, and as such praised by those on the left who viewed their own efforts to bring about social justice as part of a radical continuum.⁴³

The tendency to focus on philanthropic social welfare provision in commentaries on the role of voluntary action to the social services, G.D.H.Cole argued in the Nuffield Social Reconstruction Survey volume *Voluntary Social Services*, not only overshadowed the very close historical connection between the labour movement and various forms of self-help voluntary action, but detracted from the role which voluntary effort could play in a modern social democratic or socialist society. Cole admitted that mutual-aid effort and ‘voluntary’ (that is, charitable) social services had, at times, been uncomfortable co-

⁴⁰ Harris, ‘Did British Workers Want the Welfare State? G.D.H.Cole’s Survey of 1942’, in J.M.Winter (ed.), *The Working Class in Modern British History*, (Cambridge, 1983), 203-14.

⁴¹ Quoted in Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 263-4.

⁴² Interest in the benefits of collective action was not, of course, expressed solely by the Labour party during the 1930s. Many Liberals and several key figures in and around the Conservative party expressed a similar interest in increased state intervention in the economy and society.

⁴³ This idea that Labour was the inheritor of the English Radical tradition is mentioned in Fielding, ‘Labourism in the 1940s’, 143. See also Crossman, *Socialist Values in a Changing Civilisation*, Fabian Tract 286, (1950), 6-7; G.D.H.Cole, *Guide to the Elements of Socialism*, (1947), 26.

habitators under the umbrella of voluntary action and acknowledged that 'painful memories of the abuse of the spirit of charity' still influenced the views of many working-class institutions and Labour supporters who, 'having long been outside the pale of respectability and political influence' have been 'apt to take, when these things at last come its way, an attitude coloured by...past experience'. Understandable as this historical tension was, Cole insisted that the 'social service aspect' of the outshoots of the Labour movement and working class culture, as 'an integral part of the national activity of the social services in Great Britain...', remained 'of vital importance for the future of the social services'. Indeed, Cole concluded, it was essential 'that the "voluntary agencies" and the movements based primarily on mutual aid ... come to a better understanding; for, until they do, much effort will be wasted in fruitless bickering, and the development of the spirit of democratic community will be artificially held back'.⁴⁴ The war experience may have already eased this historical tension. The substantial involvement of working women in voluntary activity during the war may have challenged the preconceptions of both Labour women and men towards voluntary activity, diluting their hostility towards it, and increasing awareness of the benefit of combining a voluntarist citizenship with partnership with the state. Certainly, a writer for the journal *Labour Woman*, noticed a change:

Prior to the war, and for obvious reasons, Labour Party members were rightly suspicious of 'voluntary work', which was almost entirely carried by those politically hostile to the Party and was largely exploited for their political ends...With the advent of Labour to power the opportunities for direct service to the community in many fields have immeasurably increased and our responsibility in this direction has grown correspondingly.⁴⁵

In addition, the argument that Labour marginalised voluntary action to a limited 'tea and sympathy' role fails to recognise the fact that Labour defended the position of voluntary effort in a more abstract way, as providing a buffer or, more positively, a bridge between the state and the citizen. Several key Labour politicians and writers made statements to this effect, and a number of important social policy options were discussed

⁴⁴ Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', 118-9, 134.

⁴⁵ J. Bourne, 'For the Community', *Labour Woman*, February 1948. See also M.Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959*, (1992).

with this matter in mind. Harold Laski, perhaps unsurprisingly given his deep-rooted pluralism, stressed the democratic value of voluntary associations in his pre Second World War writings, for example, in *Liberty in the Modern State*, a book first published in 1930 but reissued, as a Penguin 'Pelican', in 1937.⁴⁶ G.D.H.Cole, too, continued to articulate such a view, insisting that British socialism could draw on 'a strong tradition of independent ... associations standing outside the State machine ... on the alert to defend our personal liberties against would-be autocrats and bureaucrats with a will to power'.⁴⁷ Attlee, similarly, asserted his, and his government's commitment to Britain's voluntarist and pluralist traditions arguing that 'This country will never become a people of an exclusive and omnipotent State ... I believe that we shall always have alongside the great range of public services, the voluntary services which humanise our national life and bring it down from the general to the particular. We must', he continued, 'keep stretching out to new horizons'.⁴⁸

From the outset, the Labour government acknowledged the concerns of the voluntary movement and made considerable efforts to ease the tension.⁴⁹ The government's support for the network of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, which were established immediately before the war under the auspices of the National Council of Social Service, is an example of this endeavour. The utility of the Bureaux as distributors of wartime information and advice had encouraged the establishment of close links with both central government and the local authorities: financial aid and payment in kind, such as the loan of local authority rooms, gave this relationship a concrete basis. Yet, the essentially local, community-defined nature of individual Bureaux was heralded as the main feature of the service. As A.F.C.Bourdillon, who examined the wartime work of the Bureaux for the Nuffield Social Reconstruction Survey, noted, '...while there is no

⁴⁶ Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State*, 122-5; H. Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, (1925), 256. See also W.A. Robson, 'The Problem of Liberty', a review of *Liberty in the Modern State*, in *Political Quarterly*, 2, (1931), 134;

⁴⁷ Cole, *Guide to the Elements of Socialism*, 26.

⁴⁸ Speech by Attlee on becoming President of the social settlement Toynbee Hall in 1947. Quoted in A.Briggs and A.Macartney, *Toynbee Hall*, 135-6.

⁴⁹ For a brief indication of the tension see Deakin, 'The Perils of Partnership', 40; Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 134.

compulsion on anyone to set up a Bureau, people all over the country have been willing to co-operate in the work of maintaining them, and the man in the street has gladly taken his troubles to them'.⁵⁰ Much of their success, Bourdillon argued, stemmed from the careful and deliberate attempt to distance the Bureaux from relief and assistance agencies. NCSS guidelines for the Bureaux insisted, for example, that matters concerning financial relief should be referred by the Citizens' Advice Bureaux to the appropriate statutory or voluntary body, or to an officer of the NCSS itself.⁵¹ This policy, Bourdillon suggested, revealed the voluntary sector's intention to move 'in tune with the temper of the time. Vigorous efforts have been made to secure a break with the old tradition of charity and its unfortunate associations with patronage and condescension'. She interpreted the change in terms of a shift away from the charitable provision of basic material needs, a role now undertaken by the state. This shift in the patterns of social welfare provision left voluntary action well placed to concentrate on the non-material needs of the population: 'The Bureaux give advice and moral support where their predecessors gave relief. They are popular', she concluded, 'because they have found for themselves a sphere of voluntary activity which is "right", granted the present advanced stage of provision by the State'.⁵² The growing level of state welfare provision was accompanied by increased contact between the state and the individual. The 'vast pile of officialdom' stemming from this activity needed interpretation and also feedback from those to whom it was directed. 'Here', Bourdillon argued, 'the Bureaux have a vital contribution to make'.⁵³ Increasingly, therefore, it was the independent nature of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux which attracted attention and praise. The proper boundaries of state action were explored in this context. The National Council of Social Service, for example, argued:

It is possible that there are certain pieces of social work which from their nature will in any foreseeable future be generally accepted as more suitable for voluntary action than for public control. For instance, as the

⁵⁰ A.F.C. Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisation in Wartime - the Citizens' Advice Bureaux', in Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services*, 194. For further discussion of the C.A.B. in postwar Britain see below, chapter 7, on Public Relations and Information-giving,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 199-200.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 200.

State becomes more and more the public's schoolmaster, employer and landlord, so it will become increasingly necessary for the citizen to have independent advice on his relationships with the State....For these reasons therefore the Council holds that the day of voluntary service is not over. On the contrary, there is every reason to foresee an extension of the work and an improvement in its quality.⁵⁴

Certainly, in making this statement in 1946 the Council did not feel itself to be striking against the wishes of the government. Indeed, it noted that 'Prominent members of the present Government and Government spokesmen have repeatedly said during the past year that they hold this view also', citing Francis Williams, Adviser on Public Relations to the Prime Minister, as an example. Speaking at the Standing Conference of Citizens' Advice Bureaux in October 1946 Williams asserted his, and the government's belief in the importance of independent citizen advice.⁵⁵ The Citizens' Advice Bureaux, in the estimation of the Nuffield Social Reconstruction Survey, had gone a long way to demonstrate a new *modus vivendi* for voluntary action. They had distinguished themselves by attracting 'to social work a large number of people who had never before undertaken voluntary service', achieving this by an 'essentially contemporary' approach in their principles and in their methods of work. Postwar Britain could look to their success as an example of dynamic and positive voluntary action, a lesson which could be of wider application.⁵⁶

The Labour government's general stance on voluntary action was underlined in a House of Lords debate in June 1949, a debate initiated by the Liberal Lord Samuel

⁵⁴ NCVO archive, NCSS, 'New Opportunities: the report of the National Council of Social Service for 1945-6', *Annual Reports, 1946*, (1946), 6. See also 'Bureaux against Bureaucracy', *The Economist*, 30 August 1952, reprinted as an appendix to NCSS, *Annual Report, 1951-2*, (1953), 46-9.

⁵⁵ NCVO archive, NCSS, *Annual Reports, 1946*, (1946). More broadly, the National Council of Social Service had already come to accept and expect an enlarged role for the State. This accommodation had occurred during the interwar years, a period which, in the words of Elizabeth Macadam saw the emergence of 'a new philanthropy' based on co-operation and even partnership, Macadam, *The New Philanthropy*. Certainly concerns were expressed during the war years but they were not directed against a possible Labour government alone. Rather, the implications of war itself, that is, the increase of state provision and supervision of the social services necessitated by the national emergency, provoked the apprehension.

⁵⁶ Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisations in Wartime', 205.

following the publication of William Beveridge's report on *Voluntary Action*.⁵⁷ Lord Pakenham, speaking for the government, endorsed the role of voluntary organisations. he welcomed their developing partnership with the state and asserted, 'we consider that the voluntary spirit is the very lifeblood of democracy...we are convinced that voluntary associations have rendered, are rendering and must be encouraged to continue to render, great and indispensable service to the community'. The age of laissez-faire had gone, but this was sharply distinguished from the demise of the voluntary principle itself Pakenham continued:

...in the view of the government, democracy without voluntary exertion and voluntary idealism loses its soul. All forms of democratic government are dependent on that same spirit, but the socialist form most of all. We are certain that voluntary social service organisations have a part to play as essential in the future as they have played in the past....⁵⁸

The background to Pakenham's statement, and indeed, discussion on the policy issues raised by Beveridge's volume and the Lord's debate, are to be found in the papers of the Lord President's committee.⁵⁹ Herbert Morrison, the Lord President was, in general terms at least, in favour of much which Beveridge had proposed noting, in a letter to Stafford Cripps, that 'they confirm in me the view... that we must watch the tendency for the State to take over more and more what formerly was done by voluntary action.'⁶⁰ Indeed, he suggested, '... might it not be a good thing to give instructions to your officers that, in examining proposals for further state action, they should always ask themselves whether the work could not be done equally well by existing voluntary agencies.'⁶¹

Certainly, policies which might be seen as substantiating this statement can be seen to emerge piecemeal over the Attlee years. For example, the Ministry of Labour and

⁵⁷ Lord Beveridge, *Voluntary Action. A report on the methods of social advance*, (1948).

⁵⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 June 1949, , Vol. 163, 119-120.

⁵⁹ Morrison certainly seems to be a key figure in giving definition to the government's line on this issue. See PRO: CAB 124/136, papers of the Lord President's Committee.

⁶⁰ PRO: CAB 124/136, Lord President's Committee, letter from Herbert Morrison to Stafford Cripps, 15 January 1949.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* See also speech by Morrison to the London Council of Social Service published in his *The Peaceful Revolution*, 125-30.

National Service had, since the war, co-operated closely with a number of voluntary organisations for the provision of employment and training for the disabled. The government, for instance, distributed grants to voluntary undertakings, such as the Maes-Yr-Haf Industries for the Disabled in Rhondda, South Wales, providing employment for severely disabled persons.⁶² In the wider area of social services, an expanded role was given to voluntary organisations under the 1948 Children Act, and there were comparable provisions for the care of the elderly through the National Assistance Act of the same year.⁶³ In part, this consisted of an advisory role during the formulation of legislation. Margaret Brasnett, for example, noted that the NCSS-sponsored National Old People's Welfare Committee, which had developed its support work for old people during the war, 'had won the confidence of the government' and 'was therefore in a strong position in the postwar period to help in meeting these problems, and to influence the new social legislation and administrative schemes, particularly in the field of national insurance and assistance and the National Health Service.'. The Committee 'had constant consultations with the Ministry of Health on this subject' and in particular its reasoned proposals, backed by close knowledge of conditions in many parts of the country, were able to effect several amendments and additions to the National Assistance Act of 1948. Provisions for inspection of homes and the training of staff, Brasnett argues, were influenced in this way.⁶⁴ Yet, the role of voluntary agencies also included a functional

⁶² PRO: CAB 124/136, memorandum from Treasury to Lord President's Committee, 'Voluntary Action: Proposals for Government Action', 1949. See, for example, PRO: LAB 9/100; LAB 9/109. A committee in Oxford, under the chairmanship of A.D.Lindsay, Master of Balliol, set up the Maes-Yr-Haf settlement following the coal dispute of 1926 as a contribution to the alleviation of distress in the area. In 1930 the settlement started an employment programme in carpentry, pottery and handweaving but only handweaving was successful, providing employment for ten women by 1943. In 1943, the settlement proposed a woodworking and rug making scheme for disabled men. Approval was given under the Ministry of Labour's scheme of grants in October 1943. See also PRO: BM 10/1 History of Remploy Ltd. 1945-1952.

⁶³ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 145-48.

⁶⁴ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 146-7, 198-9; PRO: AST 7/479, memorandum on the welfare of supplementary pensioners, c. June 1941; Carter, 'Statutory and Voluntary Social Services in Postwar Britain', 173-4. The National Committee for Old People's Welfare was chaired by Eleanor Rathbone during the war and immediate postwar period. It was a co-ordinating body representing many organisations concerned with care of the

dimension, in the delivery of services. As the Labour Party noted in an internal memorandum, the National Assistance Act provided 'for the utilisation of homes established by voluntary organisations' as well as those run by the local authorities, and authorized local authorities 'to make contributions to the funds of any voluntary organisation whose activities consist of or include the provision of recreation or meals for old people...' Moreover, voluntary bodies were seen as providing a vital role in making old poor law premises 'less institutional' in the inevitable period of transition which would follow the introduction of the provisions of the new Act.⁶⁵ Similarly, statutory care services for orphaned or neglected children actively sought co-operation with existing voluntary provision. While the main target of the 1948 Children's Act was the local authority, which was enjoined to make greater efforts to cater for the welfare of such deprived children, the Act also empowered the authority to 'intrust children for whom it is responsible - because they are orphans or have been removed from the care of unsuitable parents - to institutions managed by voluntary agencies'.⁶⁶ Direct state intervention into matters of family thus remained relatively limited in comparison to other areas of social welfare. In part this reflected the strength of the opinion across party boundaries that questions of family were to remain 'private'.⁶⁷ More particularly, this delimited state intervention reflected the nature of the Beveridgean conception of welfare provision which, in essence, equated poverty with deficiencies in wages. It was envisaged that the integrated system of social security advocated by Beveridge and installed by the Coalition and Attlee governments could extinguish family poverty. At the root of this analysis lay the assumption that the vast majority of the population would be part of a nuclear family, supported by a male breadwinner (whose income would be supplemented,

aged. The body later became Age Concern.

⁶⁵ LPA: RD/165, October, 1948, Social Services Sub-Committee, 'Welfare Services for the Aged', 2-3.

⁶⁶ Carter, 'Statutory and Voluntary Social Services in Postwar Britain', 167.

⁶⁷ Commitment to the family, indeed, had been strengthened by the experiences of the war. As Finlayson notes, the Ministry of Health, in a survey of the effects of evacuation in breaking up families, acknowledged that it was impossible to find a substitute for the family. Social policy thus concentrated on means of keeping families together as much as possible, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 296.

if necessary, by the nation). The minority of children whose families were unwilling or unable to care for them, moreover, were to be brought up within a framework that mimicked, as closely as possible, the normal family environment, and this was taken in 1948 as necessitating the close co-operation of voluntary agencies, deemed to be more likely to be able to provide a home-like environment, with the local authorities.⁶⁸

Beyond this, leisure and cultural policy was seen as a key area for voluntary effort. Before looking at examples of this particular niche for voluntary activity, it is important to note the significance of leisure policy to the postwar Labour party. Building socialism in postwar Britain meant more than 'just ending queues and raising pensions and wages': it necessitated a change of spirit and an altered perception of society.⁶⁹ To Philip Noel-Baker, and others in the party, this included the implementation of a distinct 'Socialist policy for leisure'. 'Socialism', he asserted was 'an attitude to life as a whole, not merely that part of it spent in work'. A socialist leisure policy, therefore, would 'help the citizens of Britain to live full and varied lives' and encourage 'a great extension in the horizons of mind and spirit for the men and women of Britain'. The passivity of the majority of popular pastimes, typified by the pub, the cinema, football pools and cheap comics, in combination with a routine and mundane work-time experience, it was argued, needed to be combated with a more active and communally-orientated approach to leisure.⁷⁰ The research organisation PEP took a similar line in its "Active Democracy"

⁶⁸ The Children Act implemented the recommendations of the Curtis Report on the care of deprived children of 1946, which instructed local authorities to set up Children's Committees, with specialist and professional officers, to ensure that children in care were brought up within an environment that approximated, as far as possible, a normal family life. Voluntary associations had extensive experience of this kind of work and were incorporated into this infrastructure of child care provision. See also reports by the NCSS's Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Children Without Homes*, (1945) and *The Neglected Child and his Family* (1948). Also, in the area of child neglect, the NSPCC remained the main prosecuting agency.

⁶⁹ B. Castle, *Labour Woman*, September 1945, quoted in Fielding, 'Labourism in the 1940s', 148.

⁷⁰ LPA: RDR/284, March 1945, P.J.Noel-Baker, 'Facilities for Popular Entertainment and Culture; RD/32 Research Programme for 1946-7, 2; Policy Committee Minutes (3), October 28 1946; RD/35, November 1946, Anon. 'A Policy for Leisure' and RD/43, February 1947, Anon., 'The Enjoyment of Leisure', quoted in Fielding et al., *"England Arise"*, 137; R. Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 55-6.

meetings arguing, 'there is a danger that those with mechanical jobs will become acclimatized to mechanical leisure; that more and more people in leisure as in work, will become passive spectators instead of active participants.' Indeed, it argued that the growth and popularity of 'large-scale' entertainments such as cinema and the radio had, in recent years, 'competed ruthlessly with the amateur activity of the ordinary citizen'. As in industry generally, leisure was more efficient when organised on a large-scale and standards of performance inevitably higher: the amateur performance was, as a consequence, losing out. Although still a feature of 'the out of the way villages remote from the nearest cinema' and in communities which retained strong local traditions of performance, for example the Welsh commitment to the Eisteddfod, the North of England's support for brass bands, and Huddersfield's enduring tradition of choral singing, there was little doubt in PEP's mind, 'about the gradual decline in amateur activity, which is the essence of democratic participation as regards leisure'.⁷¹ Yet, it was readily agreed that people could not be forced to take up alternative leisure activities. As Jennie Lee wrote in *Tribune*, for example, 'people should feel free in their spare time to do as they please. We don't want any regimented Strength through Joy or Joy through Strength' movements in this country'.⁷²

While both central, and more particularly, local government, were seen as having a role to play in the provision of leisure facilities, a key feature of Labour's developing leisure policy was the significant role attributed to voluntary organisations.⁷³ Hugh Dalton, for example, ensured the continuing voluntary, that is independent, status of the

⁷¹ PEP 61/45/Citizenship, 9 April 1945, 'Is Britain a Democracy?'

⁷² *Tribune*, 24 August 1945, quoted in Fielding *et al*, "*England Arise!*", 138.

⁷³ For centrally-directed initiatives, for example the work of the Arts Council, see Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', chapter 2, 53-87. The 1948 Local Government Act carried provisions enabling local authorities to provide facilities for entertainment and the arts. See, for example, Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, 50-1. Local Authorities were also obliged, under the 1944 Education Act, to provide adequate facilities for cultural and recreational activities for anyone over compulsory school leaving age who was able and willing to profit by them. The 1947 Ministry of Education pamphlet, *Further Education*, called this 'learning for leisure', 32-75. In delivering this commitment, the LEA's were to consult with voluntary bodies, and to subsidise the work of any organisations providing a useful service, Fieldhouse, 'Adults Learning', 266.

National Trust despite its receipt of funding through the National Land Fund.⁴ The implementation of the Holidays with Pay Act, passed before the war in 1938, also sparked debate about the role mutual-aid type voluntary organisations might play in providing holiday accommodation. Donald Chapman explored the issue in a Fabian tract, *Holidays and the State*, published in 1949. His suggestions, which were based on the 1947 discussions of a Fabian research group, were accepted by the N.E.C. in its draft policy statement, 'More Family Holidays'. The case for greater state involvement in the provision of cheap holiday accommodation was asserted: the Holidays-with-Pay Act had made the family holiday the 'right' of the majority of the working population, but given the paucity of cheap accommodation, such holidays were still 'by no means within the reach of all...'. However, Chapman explicitly drew the line at direct government administration of holiday homes and camps, stating that 'Holiday provision is beyond the boundary of what should be supplied free by the State. It is one of those enjoyments of life which, at least in this stage of human development, is best saved for and reached mainly by personal effort'. Any schemes for 'state holiday camps or the like' he argued, 'would be quite unpalatable'. (Figure 5). Instead, he suggested the creation of a 'partnership between the State and voluntary non-profit-seeking holiday organisations', such as the Workers' Travel Association, the Co-operative Holidays Association and Holiday Fellowship: 'democratically-governed' associations which could 'provide a fund of experience' for a Labour holidays policy. In particular, Chapman suggested the creation of a Holidays Council, independent and without commercial representation, responsible to the Exchequer. The body would receive capital grants to build holiday centres, planned in conjunction with voluntary organisations and local authorities, and leased to suitable voluntary organisations along with properties received in lieu of death duties. The policy, Chapman argued, would complement the recommendations of the

⁷⁴ Dalton Papers, 9/2, *Budget Speech*, (1946); PRO: T171/386, *Budget Speech; Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 421, 9 April 1946, 1840; Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 98-101. Despite Dalton's efforts at easing the tense relationship between the National Trust and the new Labour government, there remained considerable differences of opinion between the Trust and the government, particularly over the hidden implications of the Trust's receipt of Land Fund money and the Trust's Country House Scheme. More generally, there was a strong feeling that the government objected to the aristocracy maintaining a key and independent role in preserving the nation's heritage. See Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', chapter 4.

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IF THE GOVERNMENT GOES INTO THE HOLIDAY CAMP BUSINESS
Figure 5.

Hobhouse Commission on National Parks which similarly recommended co-operation with non-profit-making organisations for the provision and management of holiday accommodation.⁷⁵ The preparations for the 1951 Festival of Britain, an event which lay within the portfolio of the Lord President Herbert Morrison, revealed a similar rhetoric and sentiments concerning the democratic value of voluntary associations as those expressed by Pakenham in the Lords. Not only was a special Festival Council set up to co-ordinate the event while disassociating it from 'direct government control', but enormous stress was placed upon the Festival as being a collective celebration of British culture and life emanating from all sections of the nation. This included, of course, contributions from voluntary agencies, large and small.⁷⁶ Certainly, leisure and cultural policy was regarded as an area of strictly delimited state intervention. Yet, clearly, there were areas of policy where the reverse was held to be the case. It is important, therefore, to ask at this juncture why certain policy options were discounted by the Labour government.

This question can be elucidated by an examination of the chief point of divergence between Morrison and the government on the one hand and Beveridge and the Friendly Societies on the other, that is, the funding relationship between the state and such voluntary organisations. This episode reveals the complexity of the development of the Labour government's policy on voluntary action. The perceived problems of voluntary action clearly extend beyond those most readily cited, for example, its incompatibility with Fabian statism, to encompass such issues as responsibility and accountability. Morrison, as already stated, agreed in principle with a great deal that Beveridge advocated and, indeed, had much sympathy for a number of his proposals, namely a 'review of the existing charitable trusts and the law and machinery connected with them.' He also agreed that the Friendly Societies Act of 1896 might benefit from an overhaul along the lines specified by Beveridge⁷⁷. Yet very quickly it became evident

⁷⁵ D.Chapman, *Holidays and the State*, Fabian Tract, no. 275, (1949); LPA: RD/155, September 1948, memorandum on social services, headings for discussion by sub-committee; RD/209, 'Social Services Sub-Committee: Holidays', November 1948.

⁷⁶ Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion, 143, 152-3; see also M. Frayn, 'Festival' in M. Sissons and P. French (eds.), *Age of Austerity, 1945-1951*, (1964), 334-7.

⁷⁷ PRO: CAB 124/136, letter from Morrison to Cripps.

that these and other recommendations opened up a number of problematic issues for the government. For example, while there was general agreement in Cabinet over the appointment of a departmental committee to consider the law relating to charitable trusts, there was concern that, 'if the committee were to consider the position of the friendly societies, it might be led to reopen the controversy about the relative suitability of the state and the friendly societies as instruments for the administration of national insurance'.⁷⁸ There was more than just a political row at stake here, since these proposals fundamentally conflicted with general principles of the structure of financial policy. These issues are most explicitly confronted in correspondence between the office of the Lord President and the Treasury. A number of controversial or difficult points are isolated. The Treasury, for one thing, was uncomfortable at the suggestion of making voluntary institutions 'responsible agents' on the grounds that,

... where state action involves the expenditure of public funds it would be out of the question to put a voluntary agency in the position of a "responsible agent" if that meant that the agent was to decide, without taking instructions from a Government department, or having to account for his actions to anyone, whether a person is entitled to payment from a public fund.⁷⁹

Like the Cabinet, the Treasury was more comfortable with a review of the law regarding charitable trusts than with a broader inquiry. In particular the Treasury shied away from Lord Samuel's advocacy of a supplementary inquiry into the situation regarding dormant funds and intestate estates without heirs.⁸⁰ Samuel's position on this matter was shared by the National Council of Social Service: 'dormant funds should be made available to voluntary organisations through common good funds to be established nationally and locally' and administered through trustees and not as part of the normal administrative operations of the government or the local authorities.⁸¹ Yet this proposal manifestly

⁷⁸ PRO: CAB 124/136, extract from minutes LP(49), 15 July 1949; Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 269-73.

⁷⁹ PRO: CAB 124/136, memorandum from Treasury re. Voluntary Action: Proposals for Government Action.

⁸⁰ PRO: CAB 124/136, Memorandum to Lord President's Committee from Lord Samuel.

⁸¹ PRO: CAB 124/137, Lord President's Committee. A note from Herbert Morrison to Attlee dated 21 November 1949 asserts that the National Council were 'the driving force

differed with the line taken by the Treasury, as explained to Herbert Morrison by Sir William Glenvil Hall, the Financial Secretary:

...financial assistance to a particular object should be openly voted by Parliament and not given in a more or less concealed form by assigning to it a particular receipt. Under our financial system, the natural way to deal with dormant funds, *if* the government took them over, would be to pay them into the Exchequer, and the natural way to give more help to voluntary agencies would be to ask Parliament for a Vote. This brings out what seems to be the main point, that the question of whether the State should take over any class of dormant funds is really quite separate from the question of whether it should increase its assistance to voluntary agencies.⁸²

It seems, therefore, as if the Treasury was acting as the main brake on a wider examination of the finance structure pertaining to voluntary bodies. Concerned with issues of formal accountability and responsibility it stuck rigidly to the traditional parliamentary line, a stance which, indeed, had a long pedigree, extending back to the time of Gladstone, and reiterated during the financial debates following the First World War.⁸³

Clearly the Labour government's response to the role of voluntary action in postwar society was more complex than mere socialist distaste of the patronage and inefficiency of flag days. It encompassed a much greater variety of uncertainties and

behind the pressure for an inquiry' on this issue. See also NCVO archive, NCSS annual reports.

⁸² PRO: CAB 124/136, letter from Treasury to Lord President's committee, 29 July 1949. and reiterated during financial debates following the First World War. A review of the law on charitable trusts was, indeed, instituted by the Labour government under the Chairmanship of Lord Nathan, a former Liberal MP who had joined the Labour party in the mid-1930s. It reported in 1952. Nathan had also been the chairman of the Westminster Hospital and thus had first-hand experience of the relationship between private philanthropy and the statutory services. Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 288-91.

⁸³ I thank Professor Martin Daunton for these contextual references. This view, indeed, was similar to the Treasury's hostility to giving tax concessions on charitable donations, a wariness which also dated back to Gladstone's period of office. However, in the late 1940s the Treasury's assessment of the current economic situation also contributed to its stance. As it told the NCSS deputation which pressed for the release of dormant funds the unlocking of such monies for the use by voluntary agencies would in all likelihood add inflationary pressure to the economy. See PRO: CAB 124/137, statement from Treasury to Lord President's Committee, 25 November 1949.

objections, some of which lay as deeply entrenched in Whitehall as at Transport House, as the above debate reveals.⁸⁴ It is necessary, therefore, to look more closely at the reasons why the 'proper place' of voluntary action (to use a phrase of the Cabinet) was defined in the manner it was. How, for example, should the government's decision not to decentralise the administration of national insurance to the 'approved societies' be regarded? How were these agencies seen by the left? Can we regard their exclusion in 1946 as an example of the stifling of active citizenship by a party determined to replace participatory decision-making with centralised control?

The subtleties and the complications of the issue were clearly recognised by the academic T.H. Marshall in his review of Beveridge's *Voluntary Action* in *Political Quarterly*. In this piece, which in fact becomes more than a book review, Marshall begins to offer his own analysis of the evolving relationship between voluntary action, the state and the citizen. Essentially he questions some of the assumptions which, he argues, form a subtext to Beveridge's study, and in doing so perhaps sheds light on what might be seen as an alternative understanding of the scope of voluntary organisations to act as democratically accountable agencies. Firstly, Marshall argues, there is a danger in too closely associating voluntary action with an active and participatory citizenship: not only might it detract from the scope of the state in developing these attributes in *its* delivery of social service, but it might also deflect awareness of the problems of voluntary action as presently constituted. For example, in noting the recent wave of publications on the question of voluntary action, he points to 'the curious fact that in none of the recent books on the subject is there any description or discussion of the constitutional structure of the voluntary social service organisations. We are not told who wields the power in them, how the directors of policy are selected and to what constituency they are

⁸⁴ The issue clearly runs deeper than Labour's particular ideological stance. It is affected by not only the Treasury's emphatic stance but also, it seems, the ambiguous nature of the legal relationship between voluntary agencies and fiscal policy. The nebulous and essentially undefined nature of this relationship might therefore have acted as a brake on investigation and reform. Nevertheless, the acceptance of this status quo alerts us to the noticeable neglect of wider issues of constitutional reform by Labour. It is quite possibly further indication that Labour approached the idea of citizenship firmly within the context of social and economic reform.

responsible.’⁸⁵ The problem of identifying a coherent constituency which might call the actions of voluntary agencies into account had become increasingly difficult over the years. On the one hand, many agencies which had started out with a small and tightly delineated membership of subscribers and volunteers, had developed into impersonal commercial concerns responsible only to shareholders. On the other hand some agencies, growing ever dependent on public funds, found it increasingly necessary to satisfy the demands of the central or local authorities as well as those of its private subscribers. Accountability, Marshall argues, had been rendered ambiguous and subject to potentially conflicting criteria.⁸⁶ While not disputing the role of voluntary action, Marshall cautions against viewing their agency as automatically more conducive to the development of a participatory citizenship. Marshall does not really go any further in his analysis here but the questions he raises about the nature and expression of active citizenship, might be helpful in our understanding of some of the policy decisions of Labour party.

The Labour Party’s attitude to the use of ‘approved societies’ in the field of social insurance, for example, could be set within this context. Throughout the interwar years the party had criticised the domination of the commercial insurance companies attacking their unequivocal orientation towards profit. The issue was raised at the 1925 Party Conference, and again in the context of the Labour Party and the TUC’s submissions to the Royal Commission on National Health Insurance. of 1925-6. The hope that the 1911 scheme would produce a democratic scheme ‘controlled by the insured for the insured’ was deemed to be ‘almost a dead letter’. Instead, it was argued, the scheme had been hijacked by the large commercial providers, just as Beatrice Webb had forewarned the party back in 1913.⁸⁷ Nor was the Labour Party alone in taking this stance. As Geoffrey

⁸⁵ T.H.Marshall, ‘Voluntary Action’, *Political Quarterly*, 20, 1, (1949), 28

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *The Labour Party: Report of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Conference, 1925*, 289-90; *Report of the Royal Commission on National Health, 1926*, xiv, 299-304, 306-7; *Report of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 1913*, (1913), 105, all cited in Daunton, ‘Payment and Participation’, 183. Elements of the TUC remained attached to the use of ‘approved societies’ under the National Insurance provisions during the early 1920s, as noted above. However, the encroachment of large insurance companies weakened their resolve on this issue. See Earwicker, ‘The Labour Party and the Creation of the National Health Service’, 169-87. See also N. Whiteside, ‘Private Agencies for

Finlayson has noted, the Parmoor Committee of 1920, and the Cohen Committee of 1932 expressed similar unease at the aggressive selling techniques of the major commercially-organised approved societies.⁸⁸ In addition, as Jose Harris has argued, an investigation of popular attitudes to welfare undertaken for William Beveridge by G.D.H.Cole and the Nuffield College Reconstruction Survey revealed a 'widely-expressed hostility' among workers 'towards the intrusion of commercialism into welfare'. Interestingly, 'commercialism and voluntarism were seen, not as the complements, but as the antipodes of each other', by many whose views were recorded for the Survey. In contrast, Harris notes, "'the state" was viewed as generally benign'.⁸⁹ The rising interwar 'frustration at the subversion of self-governing approved societies', as Martin Daunton has recently argued, 'led to a greater acceptance of the state providing democratic accountability'.⁹⁰

Beveridge, too, developed very strong doubts about the democratic credentials of many organisations calling themselves friendly societies.⁹¹ The commercial companies were perhaps an obvious target whose position could be explained as a regrettable aberration, yet the parallel charge of remoteness and unresponsiveness could be regarded as a feature now common to a whole range of voluntary organisations. Active involvement in a 'culture of fraternity' was beginning to break down even before the First World War. Membership of friendly societies continued but the growth was largely concentrated in the "collecting" societies such as the Hearts of Oak which operated from a central office, and dealing with 'members' via the post.⁹² Certainly, by the later 1940s, there was a strongly articulated view that friendly societies had lost their way and their

Public Purposes: Some New Perspectives on Policy Making in Health Insurance between the Wars', *Journal of Social Policy*, 12, (1983), 165-93 for discussion of the use of approved societies under the National Insurance Act of 1911.

⁸⁸ Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 248.

⁸⁹ Harris, 'Did British Workers Want the Welfare State?. G.D.H.Cole's Survey of 1942', 213.

⁹⁰ Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 183.

⁹¹ Beveridge, *Voluntary Action*, 292-3.

⁹² Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 184; P. Johnson, *Saving and Spending: The Working-Class Economy in Britain, 1870-1939*, (Oxford, 1985), chapter 3.

original meaning. Much of the evidence on which Beveridge's report on voluntary action was based echoes this judgment. For example, John Lincoln, presenting evidence on the problems confronting friendly societies noted, that

despite the large membership and equally large capital assets of these Mutual Aid bodies, there can be no doubt that their impetus has not only been checked but that the first signs of decay can already be seen. On every hand there is a growth of centralisation and a lack of interest both in the member and by the member. With the lack of interest has come minority control and a facade of self-government.⁹³

This view was substantiated by the evidence presented by Mass Observation on public attitudes to friendly societies; the general picture, they argued, was one of 'ignorance and apathy on the part of both members and of non-members':

The membership of Friendly Societies today, judged in terms of attendance at meetings, in lack of interest in the election of officials, in lack of desire for contact with other members of the Society, is very largely a passive one....It is rare today to find a Friendly Society which has much more than a nucleus of an active membership, or attracts to itself anything like the group loyalty which has in the past characterised such organisations.⁹⁴

Another contributor noted that since charities had turned into 'business propositions', developed large offices and ran advertising campaigns, they had laid themselves open to direct comparison with the government Ministries, and the feeling that the Ministries could 'do the job more efficiently and with less overlap, as well as ensuring that the amounts to be given were as rightly apportioned as the amounts received.'⁹⁵ These rather negative appraisals of the scope of voluntarism, as it found itself at mid-century, to act as an outlet for an active and participatory citizenship could be, and often were, contrasted with the capacity of the state, via the agency of Parliament, or through the electoral principle at local government level, to act in this way.⁹⁶ It might be pertinent

⁹³ J.A. Lincoln, 'Problems of Friendly Societies', in Lord Beveridge and A.F.Wells, (eds.), *The Evidence for Voluntary Action*, (1949), 270.

⁹⁴ Mass Observation Report, 'The Friendly Societies. Members' Attitudes', in *ibid.*, 15, 20.

⁹⁵ Cited in Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 411.

⁹⁶ Marshall, 'Voluntary Action', 26-7. Labour had been articulating this view in the context of the 'approved societies' at least since the early 1920s. By the later 1940s the

to consider, therefore, how different conceptions of citizenship impacted on the Labour party's approach to the role of voluntary action.

The plurality of interpretations, both of the role of voluntarism, and of the wider theme of citizenship, which can be found within the Labour movement during the immediate postwar period, thus, need further examination. As mentioned earlier, Bevan's commitment to the principles of universalism and uniformity limited the role he envisaged for voluntary action in the area of health care. Yet, his view was not the only interpretation to be articulated by Labour or its sympathisers during these years. The theme of voluntary action was a key element in the Fabian Society's 'Problems Ahead' conferences of 1949 and 1950.⁹⁷ Leading the discussion on voluntarism was the Fabian and member of PEP's "Active Democracy" group, Raymond Goodman, who argued that the pressures towards state provision had notably lessened the scope for voluntary action. While Goodman seems to be referring mainly to the provision of health care, the scope of the debate encompassed social provision generally. Was this, he asked, an inevitable development or could it be eased by a slight revision of the rationale of provision?⁹⁸ Had socialists and social reformers been too concerned with equality, in the sense of uniformity of treatment, in the provision of social services? With the main structure of new services firmly in place, he wondered, would it not be possible to risk the variation which might come from giving more initiative to local communities? In essence, Goodman argued, the next step had to include a consideration of the possibility of combining the advantages of 'voluntaryism', which he viewed as the active participation of those concerned, with the higher technical standards and wider scope of state provision. A comparable view was also beginning to emerge from Richard Crossman who, in a Fabian tract of 1950 asserted 'the essence of British democracy is [the] voluntary, spontaneous organisation from below. Should we not recognise that this spontaneous organisation may be so valuable that it is worth losing a good deal of so-

theme was further explored by the party in discussions over the socialisation of commercial insurance companies. See Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 183-4.

⁹⁷ Cole papers, D1/16/7; Crossman, (ed.) *New Fabian Essays*. See also, Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*.

⁹⁸ Cole Papers, D1/15/5, 1, R.J.Goodman, Buscot Conference, July 1949. Raymond Goodman was director of PEP from 1946 to 1953.

called efficiency in order to preserve it?’⁹⁹

This issue leads us to a further layer of analysis, that is, the variety of views on the meaning and means of expression of citizenship itself. Clearly, Labour members and supporters carried several different visions of citizenship into this area of policy. The participatory accent we find in Goodman’s suggestions is different from the more explicitly rights-based approach to citizenship found in Bevan’s hospital policy. And beyond this, each are formed of quite distinct ideas about the mechanisms through which democracy and citizenship are expressed. For example, Bevan’s rejection of a decentralised hospital service, under either voluntary or municipal control, is linked to his ideas on accountability. Regarding the former, Bevan asked, in words which, in fact, echo the argument given by the Treasury over financial structures, ‘how can the state enter into a contract with a citizen to render a service through an autonomous body?’¹⁰⁰ Regarding the latter, (local government control), his views were equally strong, as his biographer Michael Foot has noted, ‘For local, democratic accountability, which had been a constant theme of Labour Party health policy documents, he substituted the idea of parliamentary accountability...In reply to those who criticised the absence of local democracy and redress in his plans, he repeatedly re-affirmed his belief in the effectiveness of Parliamentary accountability.’¹⁰¹ The translation of this stance into practical policy was at variance, not only with the previous Labour party health documents but, more generally, with the views of other elements in the party.¹⁰² For example, it contrasts with the contemporary ideas of G.D.H.Cole (though admittedly, as a Fabian and an academic Cole had a different sort of influence on the direction of party from that of Bevan). During the war and immediate postwar years, Cole spoke out on the importance of fostering increased citizen participation in social policy. While much of

⁹⁹ Cole Papers, D1/16/5, Buscot Conference, (1950), Session IV, ‘Active Democracy’, 4; R. Crossman, *Socialist Values in a Changing Civilisation*, Fabian Tract, (1950), 6, 12-3.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in R.Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945*, (1992), 272.

¹⁰¹ Michael Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol. II, (1975 edn.), 153.

¹⁰² See, for example, the concern expressed by several trade unions at the loss of local voluntary hospitals as cited in footnote 18, 203. Also see Earwicker, ‘The Labour Party and the Creation of the National Health Service’, 151-152, 333.

his argument concentrated on the importance of developing the democratic and participatory potential of local government rather than on voluntarism *per se*, his general analysis pointed to the insufficiency of parliamentary accountability for the expression of an active citizenship.¹⁰³ In addition, as is clear from his chapter on mutual aid movements for the Nuffield Social Survey volume, *Voluntary Social Service*, Cole maintained a belief in the democratic vitality of mutual aid groups.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, his ideas on local government and mutual aid groups can be seen as complementary. This stance, which extended beyond Cole to include a number of other influential Fabians and some MPs, tended to foresee a greater role for decentralisation of initiative and management of social policy and thus a fuller role for voluntary service.¹⁰⁵ Allowing for the plurality of opinion which existed within the Labour party, it is clear, therefore, that key elements did maintain a belief in the utility of voluntary effort as providing a buffer, or a bridge, between State and individual citizen.¹⁰⁶

Labour's admittedly disjointed policy towards voluntary action thus needs to be understood in terms of its plurality. The Labour party did not eschew the role of voluntary action in postwar society, but rather asserted its utility as a buffer or a bridge between the State and individual citizen. While the state rightly took its place as provider of material need, voluntary action was to be encouraged to carve out a complementary, if secondary, role in the new socialist Britain. Voluntary effort carried much of value in its history, it reflected the tolerant and humane history of the British people, and the independent attitudes of its working people. Yet a definite statement of its future was not forthcoming: the issue was complicated by the variety of intellectual positions adopted

¹⁰³ G.D.H.Cole, 'Democracy face to face with hugeness', 93. See also G.D.H.Cole, 'Plan for Living' in *Plan for Britain*, 27. For his earlier, guild socialist perspective on Parliament see G.D.H.Cole, *Guild Socialism Restated*, 27-36. Also see above, 144-51.

¹⁰⁴ G.D.H.Cole, 'Mutual Aid Movements', in Bourdillon, *Voluntary Social Services*.

¹⁰⁵ See the papers of the Fabian Society 'Problems Ahead' Conferences at Buscot, Cole Papers, D1/14-20.

¹⁰⁶ Voluntary action, as mentioned above, was not the only area perceived in this way, the complementary interest in the development of public relations and information services during these years is a case in point. In addition, elements within the Labour party, particularly Michael Young, but also Roy Jenkins and John Strachey, were beginning to reconsider the development of ways to empower the citizen as consumer.

within the Labour party on such questions as accountability and responsibility and by external pressures which delimited their scope for action, not least of which was the entrenched attitude of the Treasury.

7 INFORMING, UNDERSTANDING, AND ACTIVATING THE CITIZEN

Explorations of the means to incorporate or safeguard democratic freedom within a planned social and economic system occurred across a wide area of debate encompassing (as the previous chapters have illustrated) a wide range of complex structural issues of government and administration. Yet, this interest also penetrated much less defined areas of policy, influencing and influenced by the wider debate about the meaning of socialism in Britain. This chapter will explore two interlinked aspects of this discussion, focusing firstly on the relatively specific questions of the value of public relations and information circulation in the development of an active bond of citizenship and, secondly, on the broader issue of the impact of a rising interest in social psychology and 'human relations' within significant sections of the Labour party.

The search for a means to bridge what Political and Economic Planning called the 'gap in the democratic machine' found a specific outlet in discussion of the role of information circulation and continuing civic education in an actively democratic society.¹ Active participation in a democratic society, whether by formal means, such as by voting, or by informal contribution through associations and voluntary groups, it was argued, required a degree of shared knowledge.² During the war and postwar years a rising interest was expressed in ways of extending and deepening the channels of communication to improve the quality of what the Webbs called 'consciousness of consent' in the democratic process. Interestingly, both government and voluntary organisations and, indeed, the individual citizen, were regarded as having a role to play in the deepening of civic consciousness. This area, however, was not free of contention. At one level, the role of party political bodies in the education and motivation of

¹ PEP/PSI 12/13, 3A, 26, Executive Committee minutes, 29 January 1940.

² The linkage between citizenship and public provision of education and educational material had long been established, having been explored by John Stuart Mill and Robert Lowe and by representatives of those excluded from civic participation, from the Chartists and Owenites to the Suffragists and Suffragettes.

individuals in their civic capacity remained an area liable to divide opinion, both across and within parties. Many in the Labour Party asserted the importance of party membership and activity in fostering social cohesiveness and civic participation in the 1940s. The educative capacity of the party was of particular interest. After the election victory in 1945, for example, Transport House encouraged the formation of discussion groups in ward and constituency parties which, buttressed by the flow of pamphlets and other material from the party's Research Department, would in Michael Young's words, 'give democratic leadership to the people on the Councils, in the factories, in the fields, in every activity of the national life, so that there is a wholehearted collaboration between people and the Government - between "us" and "them"'.³ But, for the party of government the thin line between information distribution or civic education and propaganda, raised complicated issues of propriety: many members of the party leadership, as members of the government, consequently tended to sidestep the question of public relations in fear of being branded propagandists. Secondly, the issue of public relations and civic education could be variously interpreted: while some regarded it as a large, if nebulous, area of social activity which could open up a number of different avenues towards a participatory citizenship, others saw it as a narrow, essentially technical, device intended influence public attitudes and decisions. This chapter explores the rhetoric of the civic education debates, locating their context in interwar and wartime thought and practices, and discusses the disintegration of interest in the civic potential of public relations and information distribution in the later 1940s.

The impact of the Second World War in bringing about a heightened level of interest in the utility of public relations is undeniable.⁴ In 1933, Political and Economic Planning introduced the issue in a broadsheet as 'a subject which is hardly as yet recognised to exist, except in unrelated fragments'. Focusing on the role of government in this sphere, it noted that 'Only quite recently' had 'the need for attention to public relations...been recognised by Governments' and their early endeavours still needed

³ Quoted in Fielding *et al*, *"England Arise!"*, 95.

⁴ For a detailed examination of the activities and organisation of the wartime Ministry of Information see I. McLaine, *Ministry of Morale. Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*, (1979).

considerable attention.⁵ Government information services were essentially fragmented, departmental affairs, consciously underdeveloped and low key.⁶ PEP believed that this limited approach required urgent reconsideration: modern democratic government needed a coherent 'channel of communication between the Government and the people', yet the British experience had been timid, even apologetic.⁷ The situation at the end of the Second World War, by contrast, was notably different. In 1945 PEP asked, 'Can there be a person in wartime Britain who has not seen or heard one or other manifestation of the Government's information services?' having been bombarded from breakfast to tea, from factory to cinema, with Food Facts, National Savings, and Make Do and Mend.⁸

Yet, there were exceptions to this interwar pattern which need to be addressed before focusing on the more vigorous postwar experience. Government public relations, perhaps as a direct result of its piecemeal and underdeveloped nature, took many of its organising principles and, indeed, personnel from the 'outside' world of advertising. The emerging advocates of public relations in Britain nevertheless stressed the public service aspect of their work, and many of its pioneers moved easily between the worlds of business and Whitehall.⁹ A number of significant figures who operated within this flexible environment during the early 1920s came with very definite ideas about the social value of publicity. A notable example was Frank Pick, an administrator with the London Underground, and later managing director of the London Passenger Transport Board. In his work for the London Underground, Pick articulated a notion of publicity which combined commercial awareness with educative aims. For Pick, this nexus was forged upon a belief in the importance of bringing art, and the radiance of great design

⁵ PEP, 'Government Public Relations', *Planning*, 14, 21 November 1933.

⁶ M. Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Interwar Britain*, (Oxford, 1994), 17.

⁷ PEP, 'Government Public Relations', *Planning*, 7 November, 1933, 12.

⁸ PEP, 'Government Information Services', *Planning*, 230, 2 February 1945, 1.

⁹ William Smith Crawford, for example, headed an innovative advertising agency in the 1920s, and was also an influential supporter of the Empire Marketing Board in the 1920s. D. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy. Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars*, (Oxford, 1988), 163-4.

in particular, into all aspects of everyday life, including, of course, business and government. Art, he believed should not be the sole preserve of those who exhibited their work in galleries but 'must be rediscovered in life'. The task, he argued, clearly echoing William Morris, was '...to acquire for... [Art] an ever widening sphere so that all life is made a seemly thing and filled with beauty.'¹⁰ As Daniel LeMahieu has argued, 'in its typography, posters and, during the 1930s, in the design of its new stations, the Underground created through its publicity and design an image of tasteful modernity which provided a unique corporate identity'.¹¹ In Pick's view, art and industry, like government and people, could be brought to a better state of mutual understanding through the cultivation of good public relations.

Perhaps the most interesting of the pre-Second World War developments in official use of public relations and information distribution were to be found at and around the Empire Marketing Board (EMB) which was led by the innovative administrator Stephen Tallents and staffed by a number of interesting figures not least the documentary film-maker John Grierson.¹² Indeed, Grierson's work for the board and subsequently for the General Post Office (GPO), and also his writing on documentary films overtly explored the potential significance of information distribution for a fuller

¹⁰ F. Pick, 'Art in Modern Life', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 91, (1922), 264, 262, quoted in LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 164. A similar motivation informed the work of the Design and Industries Association. Formed in 1915, the DIA drew upon the ideas of William Morris but, unlike Morris, fully embraced the notion of machine production. See N.Pevsner, *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design. Vol. 2: Victorianism and After*, (New York, 1968), 228. Pick was a founder member and became its chairman in 1921.

¹¹ LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 165.

¹² The EMB was created in 1926, drawing together business men and government officials in the aim of promoting Britain's trade. Other members of the Board's film unit staff included Walter Creighton, William Smith Crawford, Frank Pick and Walter Eliot. Film-makers who worked with the unit included Basil Wright, John Taylor, Arthur Elton, Edgar Anstey, Paul Rotha, Donald Taylor, Stuart Legg and Harry Watt. For the public relations ideas and work of Crawford and Pick see, LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 163-5, 168; C.Barman, *The Man Who Built London Transport: A Biography of Frank Pick*, (Newton Abbot, 1979); Pevsner, *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design. Vol. 2*, 190-209. For Tallents, S.Tallents, *The Projection of England*, (1932); P.M.Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1918-1939*, (Cambridge, 1981); Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 27.

expression of citizenship and, as such, deserves further consideration in this context.¹³

Grierson's views on the dissemination of information to citizens owed much to his early exposure to Idealist thought, through his father and later through his Glasgow University tutors F.H.Bradley and A.D.Lindsay.¹⁴ Several strands of Idealist thought seem to have impressed Grierson at this time. The Idealist notion of the organicism of society and the assertion of the centrality of intuitive and aesthetic experience in forging social bonds, as advanced by Bradley, for example, shaped Grierson's understanding of the interdependency of social units and his advocacy of cinema as a medium of social integration and enlightenment.¹⁵ However, Grierson only began to explore the democratic function of information distribution when, as a Rockefeller Research Fellow at the University of Chicago between 1924-27, he embarked upon a study of the impact of mass-communications, the press, radio and film, on the general public. The shape of his project was greatly influenced by contemporary debates in the Political Science department at the University of Chicago, and particularly by the positivist and behaviourist ideas of Charles Edward Merriman, Harold Lasswell, and Walter Lippmann. 'We noted', Grierson wrote,

the conclusion of such men as Walter Lippmann, that because the citizen, under modern conditions, could not know everything about everything all of the time, democratic citizenship was therefore impossible. We set to thinking how a dramatic apprehension of the modern scene might solve the problem, and we turned to the new wide-reaching instruments of the radio and cinema as necessary instruments in both the practice of

¹³ J. Grierson, 'Films in the Public Service', *Public Administration*, 14, (1936), 366-72; 'Story of the Documentary Film', *Fortnightly Review*, August, (1938); 'Propaganda for Democracy', *The Spectator*, 11 Nov., (1938); Hardy, H.F., (ed.), *Grierson on Democracy*, (1966), 207; P. Rotha, *Documentary Diary. An Informal History of the British Documentary Film, 1928-39*, (1973), 16-37; M.Ogilvy-Webb, *The Government Explains*, (1965), 52-3; I. Aitken, *Film and Reform. John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement*, (1990); Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Interwar Britain*, 17.

¹⁴ Lindsay was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University between 1922 and 1924 before becoming Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

¹⁵ Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 37-47, 184-195; Aitken, 'John Grierson, Idealism and the Interwar Period', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 9, 3, (1989), 247-58. Aitken notes that Grierson's contemporaries Stephen Tallents and A.C.Cameron of the British Film Institute shared his Idealist intellectual background, having both been educated at the other main Idealist stronghold in British academia, Oxford University.

government and the enjoyment of citizenship.¹⁶

The basic impetus behind the development of the documentary film, therefore, was, in Grierson's words, 'social not aesthetic':

It might in principle, have been a movement in documentary writing, or documentary radio, or documentary painting....It was a desire to make a drama from the ordinary to set against the prevailing drama of the extraordinary: a desire to bring the citizen's eye in from the ends of the earth to the story, his own story, of what was happening under his nose. We were, I confess, sociologists, a little worried about the way the world was going....We were interested in all instruments which would crystallize sentiments in a muddled world and create a will towards civic participation.¹⁷

Grierson's sociological impetus towards documentary film-making shared common elements with the aims of the research organisation Mass-Observation, founded in early 1937 by Charles Madge, Tom Harrisson and Humphrey Jennings.¹⁸ As Mariel Grant rightly notes in her study of government propaganda in the interwar years, Mass-Observation, although largely financed from commercial advertising agencies¹⁹, exhibited a similar concern for the 'need to find new means of bridging the gap between government and governed in a complex democracy.'²⁰

¹⁶ Hardy, (ed.), *Grierson on Democracy*, 207. See also Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 48-58; Rotha, *Documentary Diary*, 19-25; W. Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, (New York, 1922); H. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*, (Chicago, 1930).

¹⁷ J. Grierson, 'Story of the Documentary Film', *Fortnightly Review*, August 1938. A documentary movement in literature also developed, exemplified by George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, (1937).

¹⁸ During the 1930s, Humphrey Jennings was a colleague of Grierson's at the GPO Film Unit. Jennings' involvement with Mass-Observation was brief, as he became increasingly active and prominent in the documentary film movement.

¹⁹ Crucial financial support during the war, for example, came from the Advertising Service Guild, a group of seven independent advertising agencies who promoted the 'social value' of advertising.

²⁰ Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Interwar Britain*, 17; Mass-Observation, *The Pub and the People*, (1943), 7-14; On Mass-Observation see A. Calder and D. Sheriden, *Speak for Yourself. A Mass-Observation Anthology, 1937-1949*, (1984); A. Calder, 'Mass-Observation 1937-1949' in M. Bulmer (ed.), *Essays on the History of British Sociological Research*, (1985), 121-36; T. Jeffrey, *Mass-Observation: A Short History*, (Birmingham, 1978). A similar motivation can be also be seen in the public

On his return to England in 1927, John Grierson approached Stephen Tallents with his theories and his desire to articulate them in practice. In 1928 he joined the EMB, at Tallents' instigation, to produce the Board's first film, *The Drifters*. The success of this project led to the establishment of the EMB film unit in 1930.²¹ Tallents's administrative vision, in Grierson's estimation, strengthened the nascent medium, marking 'out the habitation and the place for our new teaching of citizenship....In relating it to the art so variously called "cultural relations", "public relations" and "propaganda", he joined it to one of the actual driving forces of the time and guaranteed it patronage'.²² Although the EMB fell victim to Exchequer cuts in 1933 with 'its trained and accomplished staff dispersed in all directions', Tallents and the film unit were transferred to the GPO which continued to explore the usage of documentary film and other means of information distribution and public relations until the wartime situation brought further administrative reorganisation and the Film Unit was moved to the MOI as the Crown Film Unit.²³

The interwar years, therefore, had seen the expansion of intellectual justifications of government publicity. A positive evaluation of the democratic potential of the tool of public relations was articulated and an examination of the most fertile modes of delivering communal information in practice occurred, albeit within a relatively small circle of enthusiasts. Their efforts at improving the citizen's understanding of his or her relationship to government and to other citizens, however, might profitably be associated

opinion organisation, Gallup. See G. Gallup, *Public Opinion in a Democracy*, (1939), 5-14.

²¹ Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Interwar Britain*, 18.

²² Grierson, 'Story of the Documentary Film'. Stephen Tallents played a crucial role in the development of government public relations. In 1932 he wrote, *The Projection of England*, which called upon the state to use the modern media of film and radio to project the 'national personality'. It had been a major influence on Whitehall's increasing accommodation of propaganda, a shift which intensified with the outbreak of war in 1939

²³ Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Interwar Britain*, 18; Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 148. This wartime arrangement, however, was understood to be limited to the duration of the war. In October 1939 the Treasury informed the Unit that it would be abolished six months after the end of hostilities. In fact the Crown Film Unit continued into the postwar period, although jurisdiction over domestic films was given to individual ministries. The Unit was finally closed by the Conservative government in 1952 as an economy measure.

with the wider interwar and wartime interest in adult and civic education.

The interwar years saw the continuation, indeed, the flourishing of movements concerned with extending awareness of the interconnected nature of modern society and, more particularly, of each citizen's responsibility (and, indeed, right) to engage with the social and cultural life of the community.²⁴ During the 1920s, for instance, broadcasters and educationalists began to explore the possibility of harnessing the developing broadcast facilities of the BBC to improve citizens' access to further education. From 1923, when it received its licence, the BBC included a regular series of educational talks in its evening programme. In 1924 efforts were made to systematize these broadcasts in consultation with the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education and the British Institute of Adult Education; a process which resulted in the circulation of 20,000 copies of a printed syllabus, the formation of a separate Adult Education Section at the BBC in 1927, and the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry under the joint auspices of the BBC and the British Institute of Adult Education, chaired by Sir Henry Hadow.²⁵ The committee reported in 1928, recommending the allocation of a long wave station for educational purposes headed by a respected academic director. Failing this, it recommended the reservation of definite hours for formal education, the creation of a Central Council for Adult Education to plan the programmes and distribute associated literature, and the creation of fourteen regional 'area councils' which would establish local discussion groups related to the radio programmes.²⁶ The new long wave station did not materialise but the group listening scheme was initiated, and at first, seemed

²⁴ See Jose Harris' discussion of the strength of civic societies and other groups motivated by a concern to encourage community-mindedness and civic responsibility in interwar Britain in her 'Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940', 120-22. See also Macadam, *The New Philanthropy*, chapter 8. Penguin books, particularly the political writings in the Penguin Special series and the educational Pelican series, were similarly part of the interwar drive to expand knowledge, and opportunities for knowledge, among a wider public. See Joicey, 'A Paperback Guide to Progress'.

²⁵ P.Hall, 'Creating the Open University', in Hall, *et al*, *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy*, 237; A. Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Vol III*, (Oxford, 1965), 218-26. Sir Henry Hadow was also the chairman of the committee responsible for the *Report on the Education of the Adolescent*, (1926), which also included R.H.Tawney and Ernest Barker in its membership.

²⁶ BBC and BIAE, *New Ventures in Broadcasting: A Study in Adult Education*, (1928).

remarkably successful; by 1930-31 there were over 1,000 groups in existence.²⁷ The groups operated very much in the tradition of the Workers' Educational Association; emphasis was placed upon 'general enrichment' and social and cultural engagement, rather than on specific training leading to the award of qualifications, an approach which was later to emerge with Labour's advocacy of a *University of the Air* in 1963.²⁸

The importance of education for citizenship, or civics, became a key feature of many of the voluntary groups and associations advocating improvements in the adult education movement. The WEA itself continued to articulate the importance of empowering all members of society in the social and political process by giving them the opportunity to discuss current political, social and economic trends and to learn the historical context of such developments.²⁹ History teaching, and more particularly, the formation of local history groups, was encouraged as a means of enabling the citizen to make contact with the social, economic and political contours of his or her community. The National Council of Social Service, for example, fostered this activity through local Rural Community Councils and Councils of Social Service during the early 1930s.³⁰ The interwar years also witnessed the growth of civic education for newly-enfranchised women, most notably through the Women's Citizen Association.³¹ In addition,

²⁷ The activities of the listening groups, however, began to tail off in the middle 1930s. Only 4 out of the 14 'area councils' were established and by 1938 the number of listening groups had fallen to around 600. Financial assistance was withdrawn by the BBC in 1940 and the scheme abandoned in 1946. The chief problems seem to have been the weak central organisation of the scheme, the lack of support from some adult education bodies, the variable quality and enthusiasm of local listening group leaders, the technical limitations of pre-VHF transmission and, interestingly, listener opposition to the broadcasting of educational programmes during peak hours. Hall, 'Creating the Open University', 238-9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 231-76.

²⁹ A.D.Lindsay, for example, was a pivotal figure in the WEA in the early decades of the century. Many of his colleagues in the movement shared his Idealist conception of society.

³⁰ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, 82-3, 139-40.

³¹ This body had been founded in 1918 by a group which included Shena Simon, wife of Ernest Simon. See also the attitudes and activities of Violet Markham outlined in Jones (ed.) *Duty and Citizenship*, 13, 110, 112.

considerable interest was expressed in the teaching of civics in schools. The Association for Education in Citizenship (AEC), for example, was established in 1934 largely under the guidance of Ernest Simon, a Manchester businessman and prominent Liberal, and Eva Hubback, the Principal of Morley Adult College, a feminist and a Labour party supporter who had been highly involved in the Liberal Summer Schools in the 1920s and 1930s.³² The AEC was presented by its founders as a support for a dynamic democracy and a bulwark against the dangers of totalitarianism.³³ While it undoubtedly carried an elitist dimension - government, in its view, was a complicated business needing the specialist direction of experts - the AEC vigorously supported the use of public education to foster active and alert citizens. The AEC, indeed, spoke in similar terms to John Grierson, when outlining the framework for its activities: 'Today...the political world is so complex and difficult that it is essential to train men just as consciously and deliberately for their duties as citizens as for their vocation or profession'.³⁴

The war propelled the development of ideas on civic education. The MOI, through film, posters, radio broadcasts and other media, explored ways of enhancing civic awareness within the particular context of total war. Similarly, numerous voluntary organisations, such as the Women's Institute, the Women's Voluntary Services, the Association for Education in Citizenship and the trade unions, extended their publicity and information efforts to better inform and prepare their constituents for the war and

³² The AEC carried cross party appeal although its main ideological orientation seems to have stemmed from a mixture of Idealist and social democratic thought. Members of the AEC certainly included those to the left of Simon, for example, G.D.H.Cole, Barbara Wootton, Francis Williams, but also those whose political views were more closely aligned with interwar Conservatism.

³³ See Sir E.Simon and E.Hubback, *Training for Citizenship*, (1935); Simon and Hubback (eds), *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools*, (1935); Simon and Hubback, *Education for Citizenship: Aims and Methods*, (1934). During the war, the Association for Education in Citizenship became involved in adult education, as a provider of distance learning materials. The Association disbanded in 1957 having lost much of its impetus during the war and following the death of Eva Hubback in 1947.

³⁴ Simon, *Training for Citizenship*, 13.

also for reconstruction.³⁵ The armed services were similarly exposed to a heightened programme of civic education through the work of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA). Developed by W.E. Williams, himself an influential figure in the adult education movement and the motivating force behind the Penguin Specials of the 1930s, ABCA explicitly adopted a civic education programme to inspire and motivate the troops in their struggle against fascism.³⁶ However, Williams's understanding of ABCA's function clearly included a message readily transferable to the task of rebuilding Britain for the peace:

ABCA is not only a safety-valve for the citizen-soldier's ignorance, bewilderment or indignation; it is becoming also the one and only place where he can hammer out his notions of the post-war world and where he can learn the rudiments of this obligation as a citizen.³⁷

While accounts of the troops' reactions to ABCA have undoubtedly overestimated the interest expressed and the level of individual participation in the Current Affairs debating sessions, the activity was, nevertheless, regarded as a significant development. Certainly, many of those in authority mistrusted ABCA, regarding it as introducing a radicalism to the armed services which contributed to the defeat of the Conservative Party in July 1945. Equally, many on the left were inspired by its activity, seeing in it the democratisation of the army and also a model for the construction of a more informed and thus participatory democracy in the postwar years.³⁸ Certainly, and as S.P. McKenzie

³⁵ The Association for Education in Citizenship, for example, published a series of sixteen handbooks for discussion groups entitled *Unless We Plan Now*. Volumes focused on schools, housing, nationalisation, population, local government, cinema and the role of women in the postwar world. It also provided educational material for the armed services via the Army Bureau of Current Affairs.

³⁶ S.P. McKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale. Current Affairs and Citizenship Education in the British Army, 1914-1950*, (Oxford, 1992); W.E. Williams, *The History of Army Education, 1939-45*, (1947); P. Summerfield, 'Education and Politics in the British Armed Forces in the Second World War', *International Review of Social History*, 26, (1981); Joicey, 'A Paperback Guide to Progress'.

³⁷ W.E. Williams, 'Education in the Army', *Political Quarterly*, 13, 3, (1942), 257.

³⁸ A.J.P. Taylor, for example, commented that the majority of the rank and file saw the ABCA sessions as a chance to 'sit down and smoke for half an hour', *English History, 1914-1945*, (1983 edn.), 668. For a more animated response, see, for example, PEP, 'Education in the Services', *Planning*, 234, May 1945, 22-4; D.G. Farrow, 'An Experiment in Adult Education', *Industrial Welfare and Personnel Management*, 27, 299, Mar-Apr 1945, 55; W.E. Williams, 'Adult Education', in H.A. Mess, (ed.), *Voluntary*

has noted, 'there was great satisfaction among those responsible for Army education at the higher levels and a growing sense that current-affairs and citizenship education was the wave of the future'.³⁹ W.E. Williams certainly regarded his experience at ABCA as a springboard for extending current affairs and citizenship education, for example, in industry, schools and other community organisations.⁴⁰

During the war and immediate postwar years, however, there remained a degree of criticism and concern for the ramifications of public relations. This existed on both practical and ideological levels. Not only was public relations an 'insatiable consumer of manpower', it was also in danger of 'abuse for partisan ends'. In addition, it was, in some minds, tainted by its derivation from the world of big business which, PEP noted, is 'conceded the right to plead its own cause in a partisan spirit' in a way unbecoming of government.⁴¹ Several key figures in the Labour party regarded public relations simply in terms of advertising and corporate publicity and associated it with the conscienceless capitalism they were eager to displace. Bevan, for example, spoke with disdain when he defined publicity as 'putting a megaphone in the mouth of a fool'.⁴² Yet in the immediate postwar years these worries were losing coherence and purchase among many on the left, tempered by a recognition of the importance of uniformity of purpose both during wartime and for reconstruction.⁴³ The Central Office of Information, the Attlee

Social Services since 1918, (1947), 156-62.

³⁹ Mackenzie, *Politics and Military Morale*, 190 and more generally, chapters 5-7; P. Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, (1992), 354-5; E.P. Thompson, *New Society*, 11 July 1974; Fielding *et al*, "England Arise", 28.

⁴⁰ McKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale*, 192. Williams and most of his ABCA staff left the War Office soon after the end of the war to create a civilian Bureau of Current Affairs, a project funded by a five-year grant from the Carnegie UK Trust.

⁴¹ PEP, 'Government Information Services', 3, 14-16. See also LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 162-3.

⁴² *Labour Party Conference Report*, 18 May 1948, 140a, quoted in W. Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion. Propaganda in Britain after 1945*, (1989), 19.

⁴³ The worries were not totally dissipated, however, and once the immediate gloss had worn off, similar concerns were liable to resurface.

government's successor to the wartime Ministry of Information, for instance, was viewed by the majority of the Labour Cabinet in this positive light. While Conservative detractors warned that the COI was proof of the totalitarian methods required to bring socialism to Britain, Labour viewed the situation differently.⁴⁴ The reconstruction and rebuilding of Britain, the nationalisation of key industries and the launch of a comprehensive welfare state was an enormous task which required co-operative effort on the part of government and of individual citizens. Information was the key to this collaborative push towards the 'New Jerusalem'. Even Bevan felt more comfortable with the notion of information, particularly the factual digests which emerged from the COI and the Economic Surveys of the reconstruction years.⁴⁵ Indeed, as William Crofts points out in his detailed study of the COI during the Attlee years, information on economic policy became, for many, the cornerstone of government public relations. Cripps, for example, when Chancellor of the Exchequer and Minister for Economic Affairs, regarded information on the economic situation as 'a fundamental part of our great experiment, upon which a considerable part of its success or failure will depend.'⁴⁶ Herbert Morrison spoke in similar terms of the significance of the dissemination of this economic data. In a speech to the Institute of Public Administration in October 1946, for instance, he stressed the link between democratic planning, information distribution and citizen participation:

when full account has been taken of all the instruments at the disposal of the government the fulfilment or otherwise of the major part of the economic plans is dependent on the actions of employers and workers generally. For that reason alone it would not be enough for control by blind forces to be replaced by control by a few people sitting at Whitehall. Everyone must be encouraged and assisted to understand at least in outline the economic position of the nation, the aims of economic plans and the

⁴⁴ Churchill had warned electors that Labour would have to rely on 'some form of Gestapo' to achieve the socialist state in a election broadcast, *The Times*, 4 June, 1945, quoted in Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 18.

⁴⁵ Bevan, for example, was persuaded by Dr Stephen Taylor, a newly-elected Labour MP and formally the director of the Home Intelligence section of the M.O.I. of the utility of the Wartime Social Survey and argued for its retention in Cabinet. See below, 258.

⁴⁶ Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 19. Paul Rotha, indeed, noted that Stafford Cripps was the most receptive member of the Labour government and party to ideas of national information and projection. Rotha, *Documentary Diary*, 281.

part which every citizen should play both in criticising those plans before they become operative and in carrying them through afterwards. In this way only can we ensure that we are developing a system of planning from the consumer end - and planning must be inspired from the consumer end if it is not to be bureaucratic and inefficient...Do not let us be discouraged or confused by attempts to present planning as the opposite of freedom. We in Britain stand for free planning and for planning as a means to fuller freedom. I am convinced that we shall get it.⁴⁷

In the earnest search for a democratic expression of socialism the wartime notion of a shared sense of purpose was coming to mean more than just conformity or compliance. Instead, it was given a far more positive connotation. By the mid- to late-1940s the ideological setting of public relations had shifted a certain amount of ground, becoming the vehicle of the active citizen as well as the dynamic government. Its role was seen as extending beyond the explanation or exhortation of, government action. Public relations was now seen as an essential element in activating participation in the democratic process, from the bottom up.⁴⁸ While not adopted solely by the left, public relations, nevertheless, were employed by those of the left in their defence of the compatibility of planning and individual freedom and action. Indeed, it was offered as a means to give this belief tangible form. The Labour M.P. Stephen Taylor, PPS to Herbert Morrison at the Lord President's Office, and formerly the director of the Home Intelligence section of the Ministry of Information, explored the issue in a collection of essays entitled, *Socialism, the British Way*, published in 1948. 'Socialism', he asserted, 'is a doctrine of participation and social justice' information and public relations were its tools.⁴⁹

There was considerable doubt, however, whether this ideal was corresponding to reality. The problem seemed to be a combination of ignorance and apathy. In 1947, for example, PEP argued that 'The nation as a whole is at present nowhere near possessing

⁴⁷ Morrison, 'Economic Planning', *Public Administration*, (1946), 6.

⁴⁸ This development in the rhetorical context of public relations and information circulation, however, was not even, with significant differences of attitude and opinion existing between exponents.

⁴⁹ S. Taylor, 'Socialism and Public Opinion' in D. Munro, *Socialism the British Way*, (1948), 225.

...a sufficiently wide and general understanding of social and economic affairs'.⁵⁰ Perhaps even more worrying was the lack of interest in these matters. While appreciating the tenor of Morrison's characterisation of Labour's approach to economic planning, PEP noted that 'even the most friendly observer would have had to search hard to find in the Britain of the first year of peace evidence of a keen sense of participation in "a great adventure in social planning"'.⁵¹ Consideration was needed, therefore, of the appropriate means to inspire and consolidate public awareness. Significantly, this debate saw the teasing out of several strands with direct relevance to the issues of citizenship and participation. There are two main parts to this contextualisation. First, there was a strong, though not entirely consistent, assertion that public relations and information-circulation should be a two-way process, that is a flexible line of communication between citizen and state and vice versa.⁵² Firm statements on the importance of a reciprocal exchange of opinions in the development of a democratic and participatory socialism are clear. Nevertheless, many contributors to the debate did not stress this aspect, merely advocating an assertive public relations policy based upon entreaties and instructions for the building of the socialist commonwealth. This was regarded as an important end in itself. Second, discussion centred on the modes of delivery: what organs or institutions, ranging from the political parties, the Central Office of Information, the BBC, to the churches and youth groups, should be involved in this process of information circulation? This aspect raised potentially more difficult issues about the proper boundaries of the state, questions which, again, were not fully resolved in this context. The rest of this chapter will examine these interlinked issues.

The importance of a two-way dissemination of information had been highlighted by PEP in their 1933 broadsheet on government public relations. But, they argued, this was where the main weakness in current thinking and practice lay. In 1945, they returned

⁵⁰ PEP, 'The Plan and the Public', *Planning*, XIV, 269, 25 July 1947, 53.

⁵¹ PEP, A11/2, Executive Committee papers 1947, 'Economic Planning and Active Democracy', 1 May 1947.

⁵² See, for example, Grierson's statement on this matter in his article 'Education and the New Order' published in Hardy, (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, 200.

to the subject and noted that while progress had been achieved during the war, with government information services vastly expanded, 'the citizen's point of view' was still largely untapped: the reciprocity of information distribution needed improvement.⁵³ Studies of public opinion, revolutionised during the war years by the Home Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Information and its Wartime Social Survey, PEP argued, could offer lessons for peacetime public relations.⁵⁴ While concerns for the legitimacy of this degree of governmental involvement in 'the public mind' were acknowledged, the benefits to be gained from such surveys and studies were regarded as worthy of deeper consideration. PEP suggested the establishment of a government-financed Social Research Council, to encourage studies of 'the opinions of citizens and the habits of consumers' to improve the flow of information from citizens to government to match the advancements achieved in the other direction.⁵⁵ This notion was also championed within the Labour party, Stephen Taylor having urged the retention of the Social Survey in the form of a National Institute of Opinion Studies as early as 1942.⁵⁶

This interest in public opinion research reflected a more diffuse awareness of the potential of the developing social science disciplines in building an active bond of citizenship between government and people. Within the Labour Party, for example, Michael Young and Stephen Taylor quite frequently employed this argument in research department documents, particularly in the later 1940s as the need for new means to achieve democratic socialism gained currency in the face of a faltering nationalisation and economic policy. Attention was given, for example, to developments in occupational and

⁵³ PEP, 'Government Information Services', 2, 5.

⁵⁴ The wartime work of Mass-Observation should also be regarded in this context. For the Government Social Survey see L.Moss, 'The Wartime Social Survey. Social Research at the Service of the Administrator', *Public Administration*, 21, October-December, (1943), 119-25; F.Whitehead, 'The Government Social Survey', in Bulmer (ed.), *Essays on the History of British Sociological Research*, 83-100.

⁵⁵ PEP, 'Government Information Services', 23.

⁵⁶ PRO: INF 1/263, Memorandum by Taylor, 7 September 1942 cited in McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, 262. See also, S. Taylor, 'The Study of Public Opinion', *Public Administration*, 21, October-December, (1943), 109-19. The Survey did survive and Taylor played a significant part in its retention, persuading Bevan to argue its case in Cabinet.

social psychology in the United States.⁵⁷ Young, for instance, argued for a recognition of the congruence between studies of 'human relations', meaning the burgeoning fields of social psychology, sociology and anthropology, and democratic socialism. Many social scientists emerging from these new academic fields, he asserted, agreed with the socialist aim of the dignity of man and the reassertion of the value of pluralistic democracy.⁵⁸ Happiness, he argued, depended on the individual's ability to interact positively with his or her fellows, to 'love and be loved, give respect and receive it'.⁵⁹ Finding means to satisfy these fundamental needs were the object of social science and socialism alike. Young himself suggested several policy areas which might profitably be channelled in this direction, his ideas ranging from family advice services, education in citizenship in schools, to exploring means to bring greater industrial democracy to the workforce.⁶⁰ More generally, Young asserted the need for Labour to move away from its traditional emphasis upon 'men wage-earners', giving more attention to the needs of women, and more especially, the family, which he regarded as the crucial building block for a truly democratic society.⁶¹ Above all, Young suggested, social science research needed to be

⁵⁷ Young in fact took four week's leave from his post as Research Secretary to attend a course on sociology at Chicago. See Francis, 'Economic and Ethics', 236. The newer social sciences also attracted the attention of the Association for Education in Citizenship in the early 1940s. Eva Hubback, in particular, was eager to incorporate debates on psychology in the field of citizenship education as a means of reconciling individual and collective goals. The Association, for example, was an early British forum for dissemination of the ideas of the Californian 'Human Relations' school. See *The Citizen*, November 1943.

⁵⁸ Young, 'What Might Have Been?', 262-3. See also Young, *Small Man, Big World*. Young's fondness for the notion of human dignity binds him, as many of his contemporaries in the Labour party of the 1940s, to the tradition of William Morris.

⁵⁹ Young, 'What Might Have Been?', 262.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 263. Young drew inspiration from the work of American social scientists particularly Elton Mayo. See, for example, E. Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilisation*, (1945) and *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilisation*, (New York, 1946); R. Gillespie, *Manufacturing Knowledge. A History of the Hawthorne Experiment*, (Cambridge, 1991). The work of the Tavistock Clinic of Human Relations, which was established in the early postwar years also needs to be viewed in this light.

⁶¹ Young, 'What Might Have Been?', 263; Young, *Small Man, Big World*, 3; Francis, 'Economic and Ethics', 236.

placed on the same funding basis as research into the natural sciences, with a specific funding council sponsored by the government.⁶² Young's conviction that social science research offered socialism a new way forward was cemented in May 1950 when he left his post as secretary of the party's Research Department to undertake sociological research: the need to 'find out - and communicate to others - more about the lives, needs and aspirations' of ordinary people having prompted him to establish, along with Peter Willmott and Peter Townsend, the Institute of Community Studies at Bethnal Green in 1953.⁶³

The mechanisms or organs that could be used to develop an active transfer of information and opinion between the government and the governed became a second key area of the debate on the democratic potential of public relations. Aside from the central government information services and the call for increased academic consideration of the nature and role of public opinion and public relations in a democratic society, two main areas were highlighted in contemporary discussion: the potential of local government public relations and the role of Citizens' Advice Bureaux.⁶⁴

⁶² Young, 'What Might Have Been?', 264. Young in fact became the first chairman of the Social Science Research Council appointed by Anthony Crosland in 1965. See M. Young, *Innovation and Research in Education*, (1967); S. Crosland, *Tony Crosland*, (1982), 46, 54; P. Barker, 'Michael Young', *New Society*, 8 August, 1968, 190.

⁶³ P. Willmott, 'The Institute of Community Studies', in Bulmer (ed.), *Essays on the History of British Sociological Research*, 138. Young's withdrawal from Transport House, however, should not be taken as evidence of the Labour Party's wholesale rejection of his ideas. Interest in sociological and psychological research had been expressed by Evan Durbin in *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, and by Herbert Morrison and Stafford Cripps on a number of occasions. The party's discussion pamphlet, *Small Man, Big World*, written by Young in 1949, also carried two pages on the value of social science to the democratic socialism, 12-14. Many of these ideas were picked up by Anthony Crosland in *The Future of Socialism* and Austen Albu in *Socialism and the Study of Man*, Fabian Tract 283, (1950). See also *Labour and the New Society*, (1950), which acknowledged that Labour would, indeed, be looking to the 'social sciences...to supply new knowledge about human relations' which would be essential for Labour's plan to continue the process of building a 'live democracy' in postwar Britain, 34-5, 15-16.

⁶⁴ The central government information services, particularly the work of the COI will not be examined in detail here given the detailed study of their work, at least in terms of publicity of government economic policy, by William Crofts. See Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*

Amongst statutory organs local authorities were regarded as having a vital role yet, as PEP noted in 1947, deficiencies clearly existed: 'Although within the charmed circle its activities have been hailed as a linchpin of democratic government, the people in general have appeared to be indifferent to its existence.'⁶⁵ A more vigorous usage of public relations was offered as a possible solution. This discussion coalesced with the more generalised concern for the squandering of local government's democratic potential explored above, in chapters four and five.⁶⁶ One plan for the development of public interest in, and knowledge of, local government emanated from the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) in a report, *Relations between Local Government and the Community*, issued in 1945.⁶⁷ The report explicitly linked its scheme for public relations development to questions of democracy and participatory citizenship, urging a stronger recognition of the importance of a 'living partnership between the citizen, the elected councillor and the official'.⁶⁸ The scheme, NALGO argued, had two aims, 'on the one hand explaining to the public the work of the local authorities and the services they provide, while on the other interpreting the needs and wishes of the local community to the Council and its officers'.⁶⁹ In consequence, it would foster an environment in which citizen, councillor and expert could become mutually aware of the

⁶⁵ PEP, 'Public Relations and the Town Hall', *Planning*, XIII, 265, 2 May 1947, 3.

⁶⁶ See above Part II.

⁶⁷ According to NALGO the report was 'given the most extensive and favourable press of any NALGO document', receiving comment and leaders in, amongst others, *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Economist*, *The Spectator*, and an extremely favourable review by local government expert, W.A. Robson, in his *Political Quarterly*. Copies were also sent to all M.P.s and all local authorities. See NALGO *Annual Reports*, 1945, 79-80.

⁶⁸ W.A. Robson, 'Review of NALGO Reconstruction Committee Report on Relations between Local Government and the Community', *Political Quarterly*, 17, 2, (1946), 13. This explicit linking of public relations to the development of a participatory citizenship in the localities is also in evidence in NALGO's *Annual Report* of 1946, which restated NALGO's commitment to 'the continuance and expansion of democratic local government, particularly through its public relations policy, which is primarily directed to that end...', 21.

⁶⁹ Robson, 'Review of NALGO Reconstruction Committee Report'.

‘needs, wishes and difficulties’ of the other parties.⁷⁰

To achieve this union the NALGO committee recommended the appointment of a public relations officer (PRO) and the establishment of a public relations advisory committee. Interestingly, NALGO argued that membership of the advisory committee should extend beyond town hall councillors and officials to include ‘outside persons possessing special knowledge of public opinion’, such as editors of local newspapers, members of community councils, citizens’ advice bureaux, rotary clubs, the Workers’ Education Association, trade unions and employers’ associations: a pluralistic approach which was echoed in PEP’s assessment of the way forward which similarly advocated the role of semi-official bodies, for example the BBC, and voluntary groups in fostering civic education.⁷¹ Local government departments, education authorities and local voluntary groups acting in consort, and deploying the techniques of public relations, could awaken civic consciousness and a sense of community co-operation. George Hodgkinson, the Labour leader on Coventry City Council articulated a similar co-operative vision, arguing:

The citizen must be in day to day contact with the activities of the local authority through the medium of the Press and the voluntary associations....Here is the embryo of the new democratic technique which will make the citizen conscious of the vital part, the living part he has to play as a citizen in a real democracy.⁷²

Public relations, in essence, was seen as something like a piece of civic connective tissue, pulling together the constituent parts of the community, or else as lubricant, freeing up channels of public communication liable to blockage through the mixing of bureaucratic red tape with popular apathy.

NALGO’s journal, *PROgress*, which described itself as a bulletin of public relations in local government, explored these issues, drawing on the ideas and practical

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*; PEP, ‘The Plan and the Public’, 54.

⁷² *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 12 June 1945 quoted in Fielding *et al*, “*England Arise!*”, 108.

experiences of its members.⁷³ Their suggestions and proposals can be roughly categorised into two main areas. First, there was considerable interest in developing the role of public relations officers themselves: wide use of the emerging expertise of the modern Public Relations Officer was repeatedly encouraged. This measure, however, included both national and local initiative. Indeed, a central theme of this debate was the large scope for, and the value of, decentralised action. While, on the one hand, the establishment of the Institute of Public Relations, headed by the public relations veteran Sir Stephen Tallents, was greeted as an important development, much attention was also paid to the emergence of a vibrant local scene, centred on the local authority Public Relations Officer, and branching out into the wider community. Each edition of *PROgress*, for example, carried a record of local public relations activity, with round-ups from the local branches outlining the success of Civic Weeks, exhibitions and film shows of 'Our Town' from Dumfermline to Lambeth. Documentary films, indeed, were regarded as vital material for local public relations programmes, more of which were urgently needed. Helen de Mouilpied, a former Chief Production Officer of the Central Office of Information Film Division stated, in words closely echoing those of John Grierson, that film offered an excellent way to cast 'a fresh look at the increasingly complicated everyday world; to bridge the gap between the citizen and the community of which he is a part'. The medium, moreover, worked particularly well in the local context: 'however much a commentary may generalise, the picture shows particular streets, houses and well-known landmarks, and it is the picture which remains in the memory the longest'.⁷⁴ At the core of de Mouilpied's advocacy of the documentary film in the local context lay a belief in its value as an activating and energizing force. 'This "drama of the doorstep"', she argued,

isn't just a business of information which is to be poured out to a passive recipient. Men and women must be persuaded to *want* to participate actively, and that means they must be shown themselves and their relations to the community in a way to strike the imagination and move

⁷³ NALGO, *PROgress, A Bulletin of Public Relations in Local Government*. The first issue was published in Summer 1948 as a continuation of the 'modest duplicated bulletin' circulated among NALGO branches in 1946.

⁷⁴ H. de Mouilpied, 'The Film and Local Government. Problems of the Sponsor Answered', *PROgress*, 1, 3, 1948, 92.

their sympathy. The film can give this imaginative interpretation better than any other medium, whether it is describing how a big town gets its water supply, what new communities are growing up in new development areas, how the health service meets the needs of mothers, or whether it is capturing the whole way of life of a town, as Rotha does at times in *A City Speaks*.⁷⁵

The second main area of interest demonstrated in the pages of *PROgress* focused on proposals for civic education. These could be formalised through the provisions of the 1944 Education Act, in particular its requirement that every young person under 18 years and not still at school should spend one day a week on further education at a County College. This arrangement was designed, in the words of the Act, 'to prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship'.⁷⁶ An article in *PROgress*, for example, suggested that young people visit local government departments as part of their continuing education: an opportunity for civic orientation, the author noted, already deployed by 'some progressive firms' eager to contribute to national regeneration.⁷⁷ In a more general sense, too, local authorities were encouraged to develop their role as facilitators of education in citizenship through open days for school children, lectures and Brains Trust meetings. Coventry City Council, for example, produced its own newspaper *Civic Affairs*, which by 1952 had achieved a monthly circulation of 20,000.⁷⁸

Significantly, this positive attitude towards public relations and continuing civic education seems to have been shared by national commentators and local practitioners

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* For the work of Paul Rotha and its place in the documentary movement see Rotha, *Documentary Diary*, and *Rotha on the Film: A Selection of Writings About the Cinema*, (1958).

⁷⁶ This aspect had been a key element in the programme of the Association for Education in Citizenship.

⁷⁷ H. Hobbs, Education Officer for National Cash Register Company, 'Further Education. An Opportunity for the Town Hall P.R.O.'. *PROgress*, 1, 1, Summer 1948, 10-12. Hobbs was referring, in particular, to the scheme deployed by his own company where seven hours per week for forty weeks a year were reserved for continuing education, which included studies and practical experience of the work of local government and voluntary groups. See also F.H. Lockett, P.R.O., for Leatherhead, 'School Boy Surveyors. A Practical Experiment in Civics', *PROgress*, 1, 2, 1948, 53-55; H.W. Armstrong, County Technical School, Chelmsford, 'Children Love Civics - If you Make it Interesting', *PROgress*, 1, 1, Summer 1948, 13-15.

⁷⁸ Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, 51, 113.

alike. Contributors to the journal spanned the gamut of the great and the good ranging, for example, from Gerald Barry's thoughts on public relations and the Festival of Britain, through T.Fife Clark, Public Relations Officer to the Ministry of Health and author of the memorable slogan, 'Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases', to the Public Relations Officers and Councillors from various Urban District Councils. This is a notable element of the debates, revealing a certain confluence of aim and a shared interpretation of the purpose of public relations between the erudite and the practical.

The network of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, as noted above, became a second focal point in the debate. The Bureaux gained this attention for two main reasons. Not only were they greeted as a two-way channel of communication between the citizen and the government; they were also welcomed as a distinctly independent, that is, non-official, organ. The notion of a network of advice offices was not new. Similar services had been offered informally by trade unions, by some branches of political parties, and as part of 'their personal welfare work by a number of case-work and relief organisations' for a number of decades. In addition, the establishment of a 'universal voluntary service of information and advice' had been recommended by the Interdepartmental Committee on Public Assistance in 1925.⁷⁹ It was the threat of war, however, which in giving the question of information a national imperative, drew together and greatly extended this diffuse experience and interest. A network of Citizens' Advice Bureaux was established immediately before the war under the auspices of the National Council of Social Service, as 'an emergency service of free and unbiased information and advice for citizens and by citizens'.⁸⁰ By 1942 over 1000 Bureaux had been opened, although their number declined to around 600 in the first year of the peace.⁸¹

The utility of the wartime Bureaux encouraged many to advocate their continuation into the peace. In particular, the benefit of bilateral communication between

⁷⁹ Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisations in War-time', 195-205.

⁸⁰ M. Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux*, (1964), 7.

⁸¹ NCVO archive, NCSS, *New Opportunities? Report of the National Council of Social Service, 1945-6*, (1946), 13. By 1946 their number had fallen to 639. See also, Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisations in War-time', 194.

the government and the individual citizen was stressed. The value of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux, it was argued, extended beyond the dissemination of information on government programmes and legislation. Indeed, the Bureaux could act, in the words of William Beveridge, as 'a window' onto the 'man in the street', collating the opinions and views of its clients so as to accumulate information for report to pressure groups and, indeed, the government.⁸² Beyond this, the network of independent Bureaux was well placed to act 'in the capacity of a friendly champion', a representative of the 'small man', in a strong position to petition the Town Hall or Employment Exchange on behalf of fellow citizens.⁸³ Equally, the Citizens Advice Bureaux could be useful 'in the reverse process of helping the individual to realise that the official also is human, that he is playing a necessary part in the life of the community, and that there is some justification for the regulations which he administers, however hard their bearing in an individual case'. As A.F.C. Bourdillon argued in her review of the work of the bureaux for the 1945 Nuffield Social Reconstruction Survey, modern democracy, large-scale and often faceless, needed 'such a device for adjusting the machine to the individual and the individual to the machine'. The Citizens' Advice Bureaux, she asserted, 'have here discovered and are meeting a fundamental contemporary need'.⁸⁴ In fostering these roles Bureaux were explicitly encouraged to distance themselves from earlier information and advice bodies operated by relief-giving agencies. The NCSS policy on this matter was clear: a Bureau 'should set out to attract all kinds of citizens, rich and poor, employer and employee, worker and leisured, landlord and tenant'.⁸⁵ Moreover, the NCSS insisted that 'the C.A.B. should not itself administer relief' arguing that 'the importance of disassociating the giving of relief from the giving of advice cannot be overstressed'.⁸⁶

The independent and community-defined nature of the Bureaux attracted

⁸² Citizen Advice Bureaux, *Pamphlet 1*, (1947); Bourdillon, *Voluntary Social Services*, 200.

⁸³ Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisations in War-time', 201.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁸⁵ NCSS, *Principles of the C.A.B. Service*, quoted *ibid.*, 199.

⁸⁶ *C.A.B. Handbook*, 1, quoted *ibid.* Also see above, 223-5.

considerable attention and praise, as has already been noted in the previous chapter. Francis Williams, the Prime Minister's Advisor on Public Relations, speaking at the Standing Conference of Citizens' Advice Bureaux in October 1946, for example, asserted his, and by inference the government's, belief in the social importance of independent citizen advice. He noted that 'it was very much in the British tradition that the Citizens' Advice Bureaux movement should have developed as a voluntary, independent body, owing its allegiance to no political party and to no sect, but standing there as a service for the ordinary citizen'.⁸⁷ While the Beveridge plan seemed to envisage an official universal system of advice bureaux as part of the statutory social insurance provision, the continued existence of the independent Citizens' Advice Bureaux, complementary to any official network, was vigorously defended. 'The strength of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux', Bourdillon asserted

lies in the fact that, with certain regrettable exceptions, they are backed by a committee representative of all sections of the local community. This aspect of their organisation must continue and be further developed. They must be organised for the community by the community, and so have a right to act as friendly local watch-dogs safeguarding the interests of the individual in his dealings with the statutory authority.⁸⁸

They offered an animate 'device by which the individual' could be 'made aware not only of his rights, but also of his responsibilities', perhaps literally by working in voluntary service for his or her fellow citizens, and otherwise by seeing, in practice, the interconnectedness of the units of society. The Nuffield Survey concluded its assessment of the work of the Citizen's Advice Bureaux in these terms, noting that the service 'is a bridge to connect the citizen, whether C.A.B. worker or C.A.B. client, with the State,

⁸⁷ NCVO archive, NCSS, *New Opportunities: the report of the National Council of Social Service for 1945-6*, 7. See also Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux*, 73.

⁸⁸ *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, Cmd., 6404, (1942), para. 397 cited in Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisations in Wartime', 203. The government also established a network of Resettlement Advice Offices under the Ministry of Labour during the later stages of the war. See Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux*, 22. See also NCSS, 'Citizens' Advice after the War', Report of a National Conference, 5-6 May, 1945, 8. As well as being defended in terms of their independence from officialdom, the C.A.B. were increasingly seen as concentrating on family and personal questions rather than information on government regulations, a trend demonstrated in Bureaux statistical returns from the mid-1950s.

and a method therefore of breaking down the distinction between "them" (the Government) and "us" (private people).'⁸⁹

The tangible attempts to develop public relations and information services along these lines, however, began to falter in the later 1940s. Indeed, an explicitly civic interpretation of public relations held the attention of politicians and administrators for only a relatively short period of time. The intensity of interest shown was, clearly, a product of the war and reconstruction years. By 1948-9 the civic rhetoric exhibited in discussions on public relations and information had begun to dissipate.

A number of factors seem to have limited the appeal or lifespan of this attitude towards public relations. First, there were several very real problems and deficiencies in the government information services, particularly the COI; problems and deficiencies which seem to have affected the wider application of public relations. The COI, for instance, was structurally weak. Although the Office was a distinct department of state, unlike its wartime predecessor it did not have ministerial status. In addition, a division of responsibility existed between the COI and the other departments with regard to publicity and public relations. The COI was interpreted as a technical agency, offering support and co-ordination, while responsibility for policy formulation and initiation lay with the individual ministry.⁹⁰ This was a deliberate policy decision, drawing heavily on the interwar experience of 'decentralisation and departmental autonomy'.⁹¹ Yet, co-ordination between the various bodies never reached a particularly strong or complete state. In Woodrow Wyatt's view the COI had, from the beginning, been treated as 'a sort of poor relation' to the MOI, a status which in his opinion seriously restricted its utility.⁹² Perhaps more important, however, were the economic constraints within which the Office operated. Government information services were costly, at a time when they could be ill-

⁸⁹ Bourdillon, 'Voluntary Organisations in Wartime', 205.

⁹⁰ Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Interwar Britain*, 250.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁹² *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 430, 2328-2333, 13 May 1948 quoted in Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 222. Crofts discusses the manifestations and implications of these problems of co-ordination during the Attlee years.

afforded. In February 1948, for example, Robert Fraser, the director-general of the COI, sent Herbert Morrison the first of a series of documents outlining postwar expenditure on home and overseas information services. Instead of contracting, as had been expected, costs had risen and now amounted, in Fraser's estimation, to around 6 shillings per head of population.⁹³ Not only was this level of expenditure insupportable in the current economic climate, it also exposed the government to widespread criticism, particularly, though not exclusively, from the Opposition benches and the press.⁹⁴ The question of cost, of course, similarly affected local government offices, under pressure from ratepayers to rein in expenditure.

Structural and financial difficulties, however, were not the only reasons for the Labour government's noticeable hesitancy in developing the information services. Many in the Labour government remained wary of the implications of government publicity. Most of the key figures in the cabinet, for instance, were acutely aware of the danger of controversy if government information services were deemed unduly partisan. The thin line between information distribution and party propaganda seems always to have been in the background, often leading to an ambivalent response to publicity and government public relations.⁹⁵ Once again, many Conservatives in parliament and their supporters in the national press took advantage of these concerns. The Labour party itself was split on the issue. Ritchie Calder, speaking on public relations at the 1949 Buscot conference of the Fabian Society, spoke disparagingly of the party's appreciation of public relations, noting that 'if one discussed this in the Labour party it was called propaganda. ... The whole philosophy of public relations in the party wanted seeing to'. In his opinion, the party viewed the matter in terms of a one-way flow of information, and thus recoiled

⁹³ PRO: CAB 124/1029, *The Government Information Services at Home, Some Trends in Expenditure and Manpower*, 25 February 1948; 12 April 1948; CAB 124/1029, Cripps to Morrison, 27 May and 3 December 1948; CAB 129/29, memo, 4 August 1948.

⁹⁴ Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 218-23.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 223-8. Attlee, in particular, was notably cool towards questions of publicity. When Francis Williams first came to Attlee as his Public Relations Advisor, he was greeted with the words, 'As you know Francis, I am allergic to the press'. It was an attitude which spilled over into questions of public relations, BurrIDGE, *Clement Attlee*, 198.

from it, overly concerned with possible charges of authoritarianism.⁹⁶ Calder's view, however, was perhaps too simplistic, even unfair. There were those in the party who advocated a more assertive use of public relations. Tom Driberg, for example, urged Attlee in 1945 to make full use of the government information service, the Social Survey and the BBC's Listener Research Unit to engage the public in the planning process. In 1947 Woodrow Wyatt, in conjunction with thirteen other Labour backbenchers signed a letter to Attlee calling for a more thorough approach to government public relations. Their suggestion that a minister be appointed to oversee government publicity was discussed by the parliamentary party later that year. The response of the cabinet, however, was that it was impracticable.⁹⁷

A further reason for the disenchantment with public relations might be found in the growth of anti-government propaganda, particularly the anti-nationalisation material of 1949-50. The Tate and Lyle 'Mr Cube' campaign which set out to scupper the government's plan to nationalise the sugar-refining industry is a case in point. The cartoon character 'Mr Cube' appeared on sugar packaging, vans and posters from the summer of 1949. The campaign was the work of Tate and Lyle and Aims in Industry, a non-profit making group which had been established in 1942 to promote the interests of private enterprise. It was directed at the consuming public, particularly housewives, and warned of the damage that nationalisation would do to the sugar industry and, more especially, its product.⁹⁸ The success of this kind of anti-nationalisation propaganda may have contributed to a more generalised disillusionment with public relations among Labour members, reminding them of its close links to the world of big business.

More broadly, citizenship education which had been so widely advocated in the interwar and wartime years and had been closely connected, in ideological terms with the call for improved information for citizens, did not find a coherent outlet in the postwar period. The Association for Education in Citizenship continued to function after the war,

⁹⁶ Cole Papers, D1/16/5, Buscot Conference on 'Problems Ahead', 1949, Session IV, 'Active Democracy', 5.

⁹⁷ PRO: CAB 128/10, CM93 (47) 4, 4 December 1947 quoted Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 223.

⁹⁸ Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 213-17.

but was unable to redirect or revitalise itself. While the 1944 Education Act incorporated a commitment to the teaching of notions of citizenship in both schools and colleges, the issue failed to gain a clear foothold in the curriculum of schools as the AEC had wished. Education for citizenship largely remained a cross-disciplinary matter, to be discussed in the context of humanities subjects such as history and geography.⁹⁹ The subject fared slightly better within the adult education movement, having become regarded as a legitimate subject in its own right. Yet, by the 1950s, advocates of citizenship education within the adult education programmes of the WEA bemoaned its decline which, it was admitted, stemmed more from a lack of public interest than from a failure of will on the part of the universities or the WEA itself.¹⁰⁰

In more general terms, the belief that the Labour victory in 1945 would bring about a more cohesive, co-operative and community-minded society was beginning to seem something of a pipe dream by the later 1940s, or at least, that the right means of unleashing it had not yet been found. As the social critic Barbara Ward observed, Britain by 1947 was 'a less moral, a less devoted, a less attractive and less inspiring community' than during the war and in the first flush of reconstruction. She felt part of the fault lay with the fact that 'the government's potentially great purpose of combining social justice with political freedom has not yet been put before the people with real inspiration.'¹⁰¹ Yet, by the last years of the 1940s, while public relations was still spoken of as a means to facilitate active citizenship, as the debates on the question at the Fabian Buscot conferences reveal, the initiative had already shifted onto other areas. In particular, a

⁹⁹ G. Whitmarsh, 'The Politics of Political Education: an Episode', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 6, 2, (1974), 133-41.

¹⁰⁰ Membership of the WEA began after decline from 1947, Fieldhouse, 'Adults Learning', 267. A similar problem had been noted in Army citizenship education programmes. See McKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale*, 194-6. In addition, many WEA activists eager for the influx of interested young servicemen into adult education classes following their demobilisation were to be disappointed. See, for example, WEA, *Annual Reports*, 1946 and 1947. See also the waning interest in the Penguin Specials from the later 1940s and in the Pelicans from the early-1950s, Joicey, 'A Paperback Guide to Progress', 44.

¹⁰¹ *News Chronicle*, 1 January 1947 quoted in Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*, 221-2. For similar views see articles by Ritchie Calder, *New Statesman*, 26 January 1948 and J.B. Priestley, *Listener*, 23 October 1947.

number of Labour's thinkers and politicians who were interested in promoting active participation, were beginning to explore ways to empower the citizen through wages and taxation policy, that is, as a consumer, and by focusing upon equality in terms of status as well as in terms of wealth, raising further questions of how to build a democratic socialist society within a framework of rising affluence.¹⁰² In electoral terms, however, this political accommodation to the realities of social change proved too little, too late.

In the summer of 1951, on the South Bank of the River Thames in London, the Labour government staged the centre-piece of the Festival of Britain, a nationwide celebration marking the centenary of the 1851 Great Exhibition and a diversion from the bleakness of austerity and the still-fresh memory of war.¹⁰³ Here was a manifestation of government public relations on a grand scale. If anything was designed to demonstrate, in tangible and concrete terms, the past achievements and the future aims of modern Britain and the value of a common and active citizenship, it was the Festival. In the words of its director, Gerald Barry, the Festival was 'to be Britain's own show for Britain's own people'.¹⁰⁴ But, although the Festival was generally regarded as a successful

¹⁰² The history of Labour thought has overwhelmingly stressed its attitudes and responses to the citizen as a producer or a voter. Rarely has the issue of citizen as consumer been recognised as a facet of Labour's understanding of social relations. As the 1940s ended, however, several voices began to urge a greater consideration of this dimension. Perhaps, and particularly in the case of Michael Young, the Hobsonian influence lingered longer in the Labour Party than Thompson, and many others, have suggested. The 1928 defeat of *The Living Wage* may have signalled the eclipse of the notion of consumer empowerment, but it may not have seen its demise. See Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians'. See also Young, *Small Man, Big World*, 4; *Labour Believes in Britain*, (1949); *Labour and the New Society*, 36-7; R.Jenkins, *Fair Shares for the Rich*, (1951); J.Strachey, *Contemporary Capitalism*, (1956); PRO: CAB124/1200, note from H.Wilson, President of the Board of Trade on a memorandum on the State and Private Industry (n.d., c.May 1950); LPA: GS/DORK/1-59, Dorking Conference, meeting of NEC and Cabinet, 19-21 May 1950, particularly GS/DORK/47, xxvi-ii, memorandum by H.Wilson; LPA: R/63, 'The Cost of Living', July 1951; R/166, J.A.Hough, 'Consumer Interests', October 1952; R/176, J.H.Wilson, 'A Consumer Advisory Service', November 1952; Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, (1964 edn.) , 216. For Young, this theme proved an enduring interest. See his pamphlet, 'The Chipped White Cups of Dover', reprinted in M. Young, *Social Scientist as Innovator*, (Cambridge, 1983), 210-32. (1960).

¹⁰³ Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 140-59.

¹⁰⁴ *PROgress*, 1, 6, 1949, 227.

enterprise,¹⁰⁵ both at the central site in London, and in the multitude of local exhibitions, pageants and projects, the glow reflected from this huge reminder of past glories and future promise failed to inspire the already flagging relationship between Labour and the nation. Within the Festival itself, indeed, the tensions between Labour's desire for the active and responsible community and the public's aspirations for privacy and affluence could be detected. On the Festival's South Bank site, alongside the Dome of Discovery and the Lion and the Unicorn pavilions, was the Homes and Gardens exhibition, filled with new designs for furniture and household equipment. It was a particularly popular site. As Richard Weight has perceptively noted, '...the Festival's success was also its downfall.... It made people believe that their standard of living could be better'. The 'tangible delights of the Homes and Gardens section' endured in visitors memories.¹⁰⁶ The rhetoric of reconstruction had collided with the language of new life-styles head-on and was losing out.¹⁰⁷ During their period in office, Labour politicians and intellectuals had recognised the importance of giving greater power to the consumer in a modern democratic society; indeed, some, like Evan Durbin, had spoken of this matter since the later 1930s. However, for some time Labour's appreciation of this question remained the preserve of Fabian conferences, the party's Research Department and the NEC. Moreover, most of the early statements on consumer issues focused on the protection of consumer rights from 'the pressures of private interests', rather than on policies for taxation, wages and the market that could bring a more direct empowerment.¹⁰⁸ The Conservative party's statements, by contrast, were more immediate and inviting: it was they who received the immediate benefit of Festival optimism, winning the 1951 general election 'a month after the Festival closed to put the Homes and Gardens exhibition into the High Street.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Despite poor weather, around eight and a half million people visited the main site on the South Bank and in a poll conducted by Gallup, 58% of people expressed a favourable impression of the South Bank site, while 15% found it unfavourable. Frayn, 'Festival', 347.

¹⁰⁶ Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 156.

¹⁰⁷ See Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics*, 115-20.

¹⁰⁸ Socialist Union, *Twentieth Century Socialism*, (1956), 43-4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

Finding the means to foster a nation of 'participants' rather than one of 'spectators' had proved difficult for the Labour party during the years of reconstruction.¹¹⁰ While awareness of the potential contradictions between freedom and planning in a democracy was undoubtedly raised through party memoranda and Fabian society publications, consistent and tangible success seemed illusive, hampered by entrenched structural arrangements and interest group pressures, the lack of adequate resources for specific projects, the presence of differing opinions within the party itself, and by a generalised public apathy in response to Labour's call for a responsible and participant society. These hurdles were recognised within party circles; the need to modify structural deficiencies and to stimulate behavioural patterns towards a more overt community and civic consciousness was positively addressed, but this candidness was ultimately insufficient in the presence of other, more material, priorities, and given the strength of the public's preference for consumption, affluence and, crucially, privacy, rather than for an active and communally-orientated citizenship. Michael Young and certain of his colleagues tried to develop a notion of citizenship which could combine these apparently contradictory desires, for example, by focusing upon the family as the chief building block of an actively democratic society and by urging the greater prominence of consumer issues in Labour's programme. Nevertheless, Labour's younger intellectuals retained a certain wariness of the hidden dangers of consumerism. Just as the civic utility of public relations was compromised, in many Labour minds, by its association with commercial guile, so the Conservative clamour for consumers' choice was disparaged as simply a smoke screen for the ambitions of big business.¹¹¹ For many Labour figures, the question of consumer choice was further complicated by worries that consumers at present lacked information and thus discernment, making them easy prey for the hawks of big business.¹¹² As Socialist Commentary noted: 'every prospective consumer is fair

¹¹⁰ PEP, 'A Programme and a Purpose', 16.

¹¹¹ For an example of these misgivings see the debate over the introduction of commercial television in the early 1950s and, in particular, the views of Labour M.P. Christopher Mayhew as expressed in his pamphlet, *Dear Viewer*, (1953), discussed by Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 197-225.

¹¹² See N.Tiratsoo, 'Popular Politics, Affluence and the Labour Party in the 1950s', in A. Gorst *et al*, *Contemporary British History Britain, 1931-1961: Politics and the Limits of*

game. If he is not actually a dupe, he is likely to be an innocent abroad.'¹¹³ True freedom, Labour argued, could only come in conjunction with social responsibility, encouraged by the state, but built up from the grass-roots. Labour's problem, at the beginning of the 1950s, therefore, lay in articulating a vision of citizenship which accommodated a commitment to the freedom of the citizen as consumer as well as voter within their broader message of social responsibility and equality; a comprehensive and vigorous citizenship of the small man in an essentially big world.

Policy, 44-59. Weight also addresses this point in the context of cultural policy, see 'Pale Stood Albion', 217-19.

¹¹³ Socialist Commentary, *Twentieth Century Socialism*, (1956), 44 quoted in N.Tiratsoo, 'Popular Politics, Affluence and the Labour Party in the 1950s', in A. Gorst, L. Johnman, and W. Scott Lucas, *Contemporary British History Britain, 1931-1961: Politics and the Limits of Policy*, (1991). Weight also addresses this issue of the consumers' ability to make sound and informed judgements in the context of cultural policy, see 'Pale Stood Albion', 217-19.

CONCLUSION: THE DEMOCRATIC DILEMMA

...a conception of socialism which views it as involving the nationalisation of everything except political power, on which all else depends, is not, to speak with moderation, according to light. The question is not merely whether the State owns and controls the means of production. It is also who owns and controls the State.

R.H.Tawney, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution'.¹

Planning and participation were not mutually exclusive aims for the Labour Party in the 1930s-40s; on the contrary, they were seen as intimately, indeed dialectically, linked. Planning, if properly and sensitively implemented, offered society the means to extend, and not restrict, public participation. By enabling citizens to fulfil their human potential, unrestrained by any artificial, material barriers imposed by the chaos of free market capitalism, planning could offer the way to freedom.² In this sense, ethical and economic socialism remained fused and Labour's language of citizenship continued to explore both rights and responsibilities. As Morrison told the Margate Party Conference in 1950, 'It is no good having public ownership of material things alone....A man cannot be a socialist without a social outlook'.³ This required bringing 'into the lives of ordinary people that recognition that they have a part to play in the moulding of a new society'.⁴ The use of such rhetoric by the Labour party, however, has tended to be associated with the escalation of Labour's political and electoral difficulties in the period after 1947-8: a *post hoc* reaction from the right of the party, which reflected the sapping of their enthusiasm for state socialism under the combined forces of economic disappointment and Conservative criticism of planning. This study, however, has demonstrated the earlier presence and the persistence of such views, emanating from Laski, Tawney, Cole and

¹ R.H.Tawney, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution', book review published in *New Statesman and Nation*, November 1935, and reprinted in *The Attack*, 165.

² See for example, H.J.Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State*, (1948 edn.), 38-9, 48, 53, 186-7, 193-5.

³ *The Labour Party: Reports to the Fiftieth Annual Conference, 1950*, (1950), 116.

⁴ *The Labour Party: Reports to the Forty-Ninth Annual Conference, 1949*, (1949), 159.

Durbin in the 1930s, and given substance by Young, Morrison and Attlee in the 1940s. The Labour left, moreover, did not exclude themselves from this rhetoric. The *Keeping Left* pamphlet of 1950, for instance, acknowledged the group's debt to Tawney and asserted: 'as Socialists, we are not merely planners concerned with industrial efficiency and material advancement: our prime concern is with the human dignity of the "poorest he"'.⁵

If Labour could agree on the value of citizen participation in the socialist state at an abstract or rhetorical level, however, it could not always agree on the best means to achieve this devolution of empowerment in practice. At its core lay the conundrum, as stated by Tawney, 'of who owns and controls the State'?⁶ More precisely, the Labour Party, although deeply aware of the need to broaden citizen participation in the state and to redistribute both wealth and power back to the community, was unable to give a clearly articulated or definite answer as to how, exactly, this could be brought into effect. In this sense, a coherent philosophical defence and a workable statement of the boundaries and form of state action, as Jose Harris has rightly argued, did not materialize in this period.⁷ But if, as Harris suggests, the growth of the state activity and power, remained 'largely unbuttressed by systematic intellectual support', this was not due to a blindness to fundamental issues concerning the boundaries and bonds of citizenship. Several key commentators, intellectuals as well as politicians, thought earnestly, if ultimately inconclusively, about the impact of Labour's policy choices upon state power and 'upon the rights, duties, attitudes and behaviour of individual citizens.' The legitimacy of an expanded state role may not have received a coherent philosophical justification by left-leaning academics in the period immediately after the Second World War, but the 'implications' of the nature of its growth upon citizens and civil society were certainly not ignored.⁸

The absence of a coherently articulated statement of 'the proper purposes and

⁵ *Keeping Left*, (1950), 3-4, quoted in N. Ellison, 'Conceptions of Equality in the British Labour Party, 1931-64', (University of London, unpublished PhD, 1988), 89.

⁶ R.H.Tawney, 'Christianity and the Social Revolution', 165.

Harris, 'Political Thought and the State', 24.

⁸ *Ibid.*

boundaries of state action' and, more particularly, of the relationship between state and citizen stemmed, at least in part, from the diverse nature of the concept of citizenship as utilised by the Labour party. During this period, there existed within the party several different interpretations of the mechanisms through which citizenship could be expressed and enhanced. The importance of the elective principle, that is, the provision and protection of the direct channels of communication and accountability between citizen and representative, remained a strong component of Labour's understanding of the mechanisms of democracy and citizenship. Once beyond the level of abstract principle, however, this unity began to fragment. As several chapters of this thesis have shown, when members and associates of the Labour party examined the democratic capabilities of elected authorities, as they did at numerous points during the 1930s and 1940s, opinions were divided on the relative merits of locating responsibility for services and initiatives with Parliament, the local authorities, or a new system of regional government.⁹ Clearly, the centrality of Parliamentary sovereignty remained unchallenged during this period; there was no sign of a return to a guild socialist vision of government through functional representation. However, opinions differed as to whether parliamentary processes offered the citizen sufficient or appropriate access to the state. The disagreements between Aneurin Bevan and Herbert Morrison over the location of responsibility for hospital services undoubtedly indicated different priorities and, arguably, different views on this question.¹⁰ Other members of the party went still further. G.D.H.Cole, for instance, warned against over-reliance on the elective principle itself. Representative democracy through the casting of individual votes, he argued, was a noble ideal, but flawed in practice. The scale of government was too big, participation remained remote. Truly participatory citizenship, in his view, required 'a constant and real contact' between the public and their representatives.¹¹ Tawney, too, was wary of what he called the 'mumbo-jumbo' of the 'dignified' elements of the British constitution, that is the mystifying shroud of pomp and proper procedure which could deflect subjects from their

⁹ As discussed above, debates over the nature and location of health care provision, revealed clear differences of opinion. See above, 124-7, 165-6, 213-7.

¹⁰ See above, 124-7, 165-6, 213-7.

¹¹ Cole, 'Plan for Living', 27.

rightful inheritance as citizens.¹² For Cole and Tawney alike, these concerns nourished a longlasting interest in decentralised forms of democratic activity, which included neighbourhood organisations, voluntary associations, consumers' groups and workshop committees.¹³ In more general terms, this view which extended beyond Cole and Tawney to include a number of other influential Fabians and some MPs, reflected the continued resonance of pluralism in the 1940s and 1950s, as a fundamental and indispensable element in the democratic heritage of Britain.

Moreover, within Labour circles there was not a uniform understanding of what citizen participation or empowerment actually entailed. The majority of those who spoke or wrote about this theme in the interwar and reconstruction periods, tended to explore the question of empowerment within what might be called an environmental determinist framework or idiom. Within this analytical context, empowerment was understood largely in terms of giving each citizen the genuine opportunity to fulfil his or her potential. For individuals, this involved the removal of inhibitory factors associated with poverty or insufficient income, such as inadequate nutrition, inappropriate housing, and deficient education, so that citizens would be enabled to live more constructive and fulfilling lives. Through this intervention a stronger correlation would be established between the abstract opportunities conveyed in civil and political rights and the actual prospects of human self-fulfilment.¹⁴ The idiom of environmental determinism, moreover, was commonly utilised to explain social or community development. In particular, there was considerable interest in the impact of the built environment upon the cultural and spiritual well-being of society. This was, of course, a seasoned hypothesis and one that appealed to commentators beyond the boundaries of the political left: the notion, for instance, had been given full expression through the garden city and suburb movements, ventures

¹² Terrill, *R.H.Tawney*, 182-7.

¹³ See above, 160-1, 221-2; Brooke, *Labour's War*, 289-91. Cole's last book, *The Case for Industrial Partnership*, (1957), for example, pursued this theme in the context of industrial organisation.

¹⁴ The need to bridge the gap between an individual's theoretical opportunities or entitlements, and their realistic chances of utilising or receiving them, for example, informed Tawney's understanding of equality. See Tawney, *Equality*, 46-7; Terrill, *R.H.Tawney*, 123, 128.

supported by paternalistic Tories as well as radical liberals and communitarian socialists.¹⁵ Yet, the left undoubtedly found environmental determinism a meaningful and useful idiom; Labour's New Towns policy of 1946, for example, reiterated its precepts. As Lewis Silkin asserted, the creation of carefully planned and designed New Towns

may well produce...a new type of citizen, a healthy, self-respecting, dignified person with a sense of beauty, culture and civic pride. Cicero said: "A man's dignity is enhanced by the home he lives in". I say, even more by the town he lives in. In the long run, the new towns will be judged by the kind of citizens they produced, by whether they create this spirit of friendship, neighbourliness and comradeship.¹⁶

However, by itself the notion of an environmentally-engendered, organic social unity, spoke a very restricted language of empowerment. In many respects, this was an empowerment associated with rights, for example, the right to live in a decent home, or to have full access to the countryside and 'the great heritage of culture' of the nation.¹⁷ It did not necessitate discussion of empowerment in more concrete terms, that is, whether or not citizens were actively involved in decision making processes, in management and control. Indeed, the Labour government's decision to administer the New Towns through centrally-appointed Development Corporations occasioned considerable criticism in this context.

However, key members of the Labour party, at least by the later 1940s, were acknowledging the insufficiency of an environmentally-rooted participation or empowerment. While it continued to be regarded as a valuable component in the mosaic of modern citizenship, awareness and effort were also devoted to detailed, policy-based analyses of how citizens could be more thoroughly incorporated into the planning or governing process. For example, Silkin's decision to vest ultimate power for the administration of National Parks in the local authorities, thus making the National Parks Commission - a body representing the country's preservation associations - merely an advisory body was shaped by his belief that local government offered the nation a much

¹⁵ See above, 41-67.

¹⁶ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 422, 1091.

¹⁷ The 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act was another policy which gave full play to the environmental-determinist idiom. See Weight, 'Pale Stood Albion', 88-139.

more democratic and accountable solution. Labour, it has been argued throughout this study, did not ignore the implications for citizenship when reallocating responsibility for the various aspects of social and economic organisation. This was, however, a complicated and uneven process, where decisions often were affected by structural factors and the interplay of existing interests as much as by ideological preferences.¹⁸ In this respect, Labour's inability to formulate a coherent structural response to the changing boundaries of the state that faithfully reflected its ideological commitment to a union of planning and participation was understandable.

Of even greater significance, perhaps, was the fact that a number of prominent Labour politicians and commentators were themselves drawing attention to the structural difficulties affecting their search for a fusion of planning and participation. Their appraisals went beyond the issue of how to engage with existing statutory structures and patterns of government, to highlight more fundamental changes, current and anticipated, to modern society and social organisation. By locating their social, economic and political aims as democratic socialists within this general framework, Labour thinkers and politicians engaged with an ongoing and politically diffuse debate about the changing shape of British society, and its implications for both the state and the citizen.

From the last decades of the nineteenth century many politicians, academics, business leaders and other commentators drew attention to the economic, social and political transformations affecting society in Britain and, indeed, across the wider world. Change was recognisable; the meanings and implications of such change, however, were less decipherable, and debates about the boundaries between civil society and the state, shifting under the weight of these multifarious developments, continued unabated into the post-First World War period. At the base of many of these discussions lay an awareness of the changing dimensions of social and economic activity. As technological innovations enlarged the scale of public services and private businesses alike, social relationships were relocated beyond the locality to a far greater extent than previously, often pushing

¹⁸ The formation of the NHS is the prime example of pressures from competing interests. While Bevan's attachment to the principle of Parliamentary accountability informed his rejection of Labour party policy on local government control of hospitals, his decision was as much the result of his recognition of the medical profession's anxiety to avoid local authority control virtually at any cost. See above 156; Daunton, 'Payment and Participation', 207.

administrative mechanisms into new and unplanned directions. Local government responsibilities and the mechanisms of accountability, for example, became clouded by the addition of new, *ad hoc* authorities. Moreover, as increasing social expectations meshed with rising concerns for the efficiency and competitiveness of the British economy, pressure to improve the capacity of groups or particular interests to articulate and implement their views intensified, and discussions on their relationships with statutory agencies and with each other ensued ¹⁹

The responses of Labour thinkers and politicians to these pressures of modern social and economic life were varied and complex. The variability of socialist thought, particularly with regard to economic strategies designed to confront the problem of unemployment, has been recognised for the period c.1900 to c.1930. Noel Thompson, for instance, has pointed to the 'two roads to socialism' proposed by J.A.Hobson and the Fabians in the 1920s.²⁰ Hobson's approach meshed with that of the ILP, and advocated the enhancement of the 'economic power of the working-class consumer', through a 'living wage', as a transformative measure leading towards socialism. The Fabian view, by contrast, was dismissive of the value of the market, regarding it as wasteful and anarchistic, and instead favoured the progressive extension of public ownership, economies of scale, expert-driven economic decision-making, combined with a redistributive fiscal policy.²¹ John Rowett has referred to a similar socialist plurality in the 1910s-20s which accommodated a decentralised vision of socialism, as sponsored, in particular, by the provincial members of the ILP and by guild socialist elements associated with G.D.H.Cole.²² The 1930s, however, have been perceived as a less flexible period for Labour: the pliancy of the first interwar decade restricted by the intensely programmatic response to the shock of the 1931 collapse, a response characterised by a

¹⁹ Ritschel, 'A Corporatist Economy in Britain?'; J. Turner, 'The Politics of "Organised Business" in the First World War' and R. Roberts, 'The Administrative Origins of Industrial Diplomacy: an Aspect of Government-Industry Relations', in J.Turner (ed.), *Business and Politics. Studies of Business Activity in British Politics, 1900-1945*, (1984), 48-9 and 104 respectively.

²⁰ Thompson, 'Hobson and the Fabians'.

²¹ *Ibid.*; E.Durbin, *New Jerusalems*, 32-45, 52-61.

²² Rowett, 'Labour and Local Government'.

drive towards greater efficiency through a centrally planned economy.²³ This was Labour's age of 'blueprints', where divisions existed at the level of priorities and the degree of centralised control but rarely 'presented fundamentally different visions of the means towards socialism'.²⁴ Yet, as this study has suggested, this methodological shift was perhaps less complete than is often argued, and certainly should not be too closely associated with a concomitant change in ideology. Even during this search for strategic certainties, the variability of approaches under the broad term 'planning' attracted insightful debate. More fundamentally, a commitment to an ethical, and human-centred vision of socialism remained a major element of Labour's understanding of the new society. Historians have insufficiently appreciated that Labour's recognition of the social and economic pressures towards centralisation during the 1930s did not necessarily denote an ideological affinity towards them. Democratic socialism, for many within Labour circles 'was concerned with releasing energies as well as harnessing them'.²⁵ This was true of the 1930s and 1940s as much as for the previous decade. Labour's task as a democratic socialist party was to recognise the centripetal pressures acting upon modern society - for example, technological changes, the need for efficient economic and industrial management in a competitive world, and the rising social expectations of citizens themselves - and to respond to them in such a way as to create both a more effective and a more egalitarian society.

The contours and the clarity of the ideological union between planning and participation developed during the war and reconstruction years, particularly through the writings of Cole, Laski, Durbin and Young. However, the practical difficulties of achieving such a fusion in a modern society, also became worryingly clear. Michael Young outlined the problem in a number of research statements for the Party in 1949-50, and in his pamphlet *Small Man, Big World*. Labour and Britain were experiencing, in his words, 'the democratic dilemma': efficiency in a modern society required 'bigness', yet

²³ Foote, *The Labour Party's Political Thought*.

²⁴ Brooke, *Labour's War*, 28; 21.

²⁵ Terrill, *R.H.Tawney*, 191.

democracy thrived on 'smallness'.²⁶ The problem confronting Labour, therefore, was 'how to create an integrated but free society giving to every person that sense of belonging which a mechanical large-scale age has undermined.'²⁷ Young did not advocate a wholesale retreat from large-scale organisation; he acknowledged the irreversibility, but also the value of many aspects of the drive towards 'bigness'. 'Today', he argued,

men obtain a high standard of life by co-operating with thousands of other unknown and unseen people in a vast division of labour....This vast division of labour we cannot abandon either in the world, the nation or the factory....Destroying bigness would not only reduce the standard of living; it would also destroy democracy. In fact economic expansion, resting on the twin foundations of full employment and a rising standard of life, is an essential condition of extending democracy.²⁸

There was to be 'no salvation', therefore, in simply 'substituting William Morris for the Morris car.'²⁹ Nevertheless, in the jittery years of 1949-50 the Fabianism of the Webbs which, it was felt, had done so much to shape and promote 'bigness' was exposed to criticism. Cole, in particular, could not resist striking a blow, arguing that the Labour government had relied too heavily on

legacies from the past, when the perils of bigness and of centralisation were less appreciated and the tendencies of Trade Unionisms towards the nationalisation of collective bargaining combined with the Webbs' lack of libertarian impulse to foist on the Labour movement a programme of collectivisation and defeat the school of socialist freedom to which I belonged (and belong).³⁰

Austen Albu and Richard Crossman both equated this bias in the recent practical experience of socialism with an overestimation of the scope of economically-rooted analyses; 'policies developed on no stronger basis of knowledge of human behaviour than those which satisfied Jeremy Bentham' were inadequate, and produced 'an abstract and

²⁶ Young, *Small Man, Big World*, 3.

²⁷ LPA, RD/353, M.Young, 'A Plea for Restatement of Socialism', April 1950, 3.

²⁸ Young, *Small Man, Big World*, 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Cole Papers, D1/17/2, Second Buscot Conference on 'Problems Ahead', 31 March -2 April 1950, 'Notes on [M. Young's] "British Socialist Way of Life", 5-6. Another caustic critique of the limitations of the Webbian tradition came from Anthony Crosland. See Francis, 'Economics and Ethics', 239.

distorted result'. This limited knowledge, Crossman argued, had to be 'reinforced by other social sciences, more modern studies of non-economic aspects of human behaviour'.³¹ Young, too, advanced this line of analysis seeing in the more thorough application of the study of 'human relations' the means to foster a society conducive both to the ideals of William Morris and Morris motors. Productive efficiency and economic prosperity, it was argued, could be divorced from the emotional detachment, indeed, alienation, engendered by what Albu termed 'the unnamed jobs performed in a mass-production factory'.³² But to achieve this attention had to be redirected away from nationalisation and towards questions of responsibility and accountability which contained 'a recognition of human dignity'.³³

These discussions among Labour's younger intellectuals in the last months of the Attlee government can be seen as a continuation of their attempts to steer society away from adopting a merely economic, and thus pragmatic, legitimacy of the extended state and, in this sense, reflected the continuing resonance of the idealism which had informed debates in the 1920s. Their discussions, however, also demonstrated an explicitly contemporary agenda. The search for a more sophisticated response to the implications of state power, to be successful, had to be guided by the findings of the newer social sciences, especially psychology and sociology, and by detailed, case-study analyses of the realities of state power and its impact upon citizens.³⁴ Economic aspects of socialism were not disregarded in this process of re-evaluation - on the contrary, economic and

³¹ Crossman, *Socialist Values in a Changing Civilisation*; Albu, *Socialism and the Study of Man*. Crosland also spoke of the importance of the psychological dimension. During the early 1950s, Crosland sought to move beyond the emerging 'Gaitskellite' emphasis on a material distribution of wealth and a meritocratic conception of equality of opportunity, as reflected, for instance, in the ideas of Jay and Jenkins, to include social psychological strategies designed to reduce 'social envy'.

³² Albu, *Socialism and the Study of Man*, 19.

³³ Fabian Papers, G 50/3, 2, 'Conference on Problems Ahead', Session II, Crossman on Young's 'The British Socialist Way of Life', March 1950, 6-7. See also Cole, *The Case for Industrial Partnership*.

³⁴ Young certainly believed in the appropriateness of specific studies, having been instrumental in developing the policy-by-policy approach of PEP's 'Active Democracy' group.

fiscal strategies occupied a significant place in the developing revisionism, with a rising interest shown in wages and profits policies, and in socialism's relationships with the market and the private sector - but, for a group of politicians and intellectuals, the strongest motivation for the development of new policies arguably remained the desire to build a more genuinely fraternal society.³⁵ Interest in the methodologies and techniques of newer, positivistic social sciences in the later 1940s and early 1950s did not necessarily denote the rejection or assumed redundancy of normative political philosophy, but rather represented a desire to deepen understanding of the real dynamics of citizenship by uncovering the nuts and bolts of its processes: a desire which existed precisely because the relationship between state and civil society continued to be invested by democratic socialists with such ethical significance.³⁶

The group Socialist Union, formed by the editorial board of the journal *Socialist Commentary* in 1951 which included among its members Michael Young, Rita Hinden, Allan Flanders and Dick Taverne, exemplified the continued resonance of ethical values to democratic socialists in the mid-1950s, and the endeavour to fuse political theory with sociological and economic analyses. *Twentieth Century Socialism*, a treatise published by the group in 1956, located the group's aims and methods as 'applied ethics - socialist ethics applied to the sphere of economic organisation'. 'We share', the group asserted,

Keir Hardie's view that socialism is "at bottom a question of ethics or morals. It has mainly to do with the relationships which should exist between a man and his fellows". Our aim has been to find a comprehensive and consistent view of the socialist economy of tomorrow, which combines the idealism inherent in our conception of the good society with the realism essential to bring it about.³⁷

³⁵ See, for example, Strachey, *Contemporary Capitalism*; Jenkins, *Fair Shares For the Rich*; Socialist Union, *Twentieth Century Socialism*.

³⁶ The best example of this confluence of normative statements of fellowship and advocacy of positivist social research emanating from within Labour circles is Young's Labour Party research department memorandum 'Social Science and the Labour Party programme', reproduced as Young, 'What Might Have Been'. See also the work of a number of left-leaning academics within the emerging social sciences, who also drew heavily upon Tawney's vision of egalitarian fellowship and Cole's emphasis upon pluralism within collectivism, for example, Richard Titmuss, John Vaizey, David Donnison, Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend at the London School of Economics.

³⁷ Socialist Union, *Twentieth Century Socialism*, 7.

These efforts, however, were deflected during the middle 1950s and early 1960s by successive election defeats, and by Labour's disorientation in the face of the growing affluence of the working classes under a Conservative government.³⁸ Idealism and realism failed to fuse with practical policy and party intellectuals in the 1950s were ultimately unable to move beyond the mere depiction of a democratic socialism based on 'active and informed participation' of citizens in civic affairs.³⁹ In its absence, and largely by default, a pragmatic justification of state action and expansion emerged, based on a language of efficiency and economic utility. It has proved to be a vulnerable substitute; ill-equipped to deflect the criticism which emanated from both right and left once the deficiencies of the postwar economy and welfare settlement became increasingly apparent in the 1960s and 1970s.

³⁸ S. Hall, 'The Supply of Demand' in E.P.Thompson, (ed.), *Out of Apathy*, (1960).

³⁹ Socialist Union, Committee Minutes, 29 September 1956, quoted in Ellison, 'Conceptions of Equality', 303-4.

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